

Thomas Bateman
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TALES AND ROMANCES
OF THE
Northern Nations,

IN THREE VOLUMES.



The Field of Terror, p. 23.

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THE FIELD OF TERROR.

IN a fertile district of Silesia, situated at the foot of the Ogre mountains, a party of relations were collected together, a short time before the peace of Westphalia, for the purpose of dividing the property of a wealthy farmer, who had died without children, and whose large estates lay scattered about in the neighbouring country. In furtherance of this object, the several claimants were assembled in the principal inn of the village, and the adjustment of their respective shares would soon have been brought to a conclusion, but for a small estate, which common report had endowed with singular qualities, and which was called the “Field of Terror.”

It lay amid the surrounding fields, covered

with flowers, and an abundance of rank and luxuriant shrubs, which, while they bore ample testimony to the vigour and fertility of the soil, were equally indicative of the neglect, and desolation, to which it was abandoned. For a long series of years, no ploughshare had penetrated its surface, no seed had been cast upon its furrows; or, if at intervals the attempt was made, the cattle had been invariably seized with phrenzy, had wildly broken from the yoke; and the plough-men and hinds, had rushed from the spot in fright and alarm, affirming, that it was haunted by the most terrific phantoms, who followed the labourer in his duties with a kind of awful familiarity, looking over his shoulders in a manner which no human understanding could bear, and which nothing could prevent from producing delirium and madness.

The question now in dispute was, who should receive this more than suspicious field, as a part of his inheritance. Every man seemed to think, as is the common course of the world, that this self-same spot, which would be useless and of

no possible value in his own care, might be extremely applicable, and even advantageous, to his neighbour : and thus the contest, for its right appropriation continued till a late hour of the evening. At length, one of the party proposed a remedy, which, though not directly benefitting any one present, seemed to promise a settlement of the dispute.

“ By a codicil in the will,” said he, “ we are enjoined to shew some mark of kindness, to a poor relation of the testator, who lives hard by in the village. It is true, the girl is very distantly related to us ; and there can be no doubt that portionless as she is, she will yet procure a warm man for her husband, for she is a clever, frugal lass, and the people call her the pretty Sabina. Suppose, we give up this “ Field of Terror ” to her ; we shall at once get rid of the testator’s injunction ; and to say the truth, it is no inconsiderable gift, provided she gets a husband who knows how to go the right way to work with it.” The others immediately consented to this proposal, and one of the relatives

was dispatched to announce the gracious benefaction.

In the mean time, as the twilight began to descend, somebody had knocked at Sabina's door, and to her question of "Who's there?" a reply was given, which had the instant effect of withdrawing the bolt of her little bed-room window. It was a voice long and anxiously sighed for, the voice of her faithful Constantine; who, poor as herself, had two years before joined a regiment on foreign service, in the hope of facilitating a union with his beloved Sabina, whose heart filled with the purest affection, was entirely devoted to him.

It was a beautiful sight to see the joy which lighted up the lovely countenance of Sabina, as her eyes diffused in tears, her face covered with smiles, appeared through the winding branches of columbine which grew before her cottage, and, as the erect and youthful soldier gazed upon her in modest silent bliss, and extended towards her his faithful hand.

"Oh! Constantine," she exclaimed, in a low

and bashful tone of voice, "heaven be praised, that it has sent you once more home again, and living. This has been the burden of all my evening and morning prayers, even when you may not have succeeded in obtaining the hoped for fortune."

"As for fortune," replied Constantine, as he shook his head and smiled, "that indeed wears but a very indifferent aspect. Still, it is better than when I went away, and if you but feel courage enough for the undertaking, I fancy we may yet be married, and manage to get through the world in tolerable decency."

"Faithful Constantine!" ejaculated Sabina, "thus to connect your happiness, with the fortunes of a poor deserted orphan!"

"Come!" my love, said the ardent soldier, "if you can but trust me, say so; give me at once your consent to our union. I assure you, things will not run so badly with us; we shall be happy in each other, and, with such a foundation, we may yet live like princes."

"And have you obtained your discharge?"

Are you really no longer a soldier? Is the war at an end?"

"Why as for that," rejoined her lover, "the matter, at present, is hardly decided in either way. The peace is not in fact concluded, but then, the war is quite at a stand; and on this account, my colonel has thought it right to disband his regiment."

Sabina now extended her hand to her eager lover, in all the joy of youthful, ardent affection, and permitted her future bridegroom to enter the cottage. The youthful pair were speedily seated, and Constantine informed his mistress, that he had obtained his small stock of wealth from an Italian prisoner, whom he had captured on the field of battle, and who had paid this, as the price of his liberty and his life. Sabina, as she turned her wheel, listened with deep attention to her lover's recital, bestowing, from time to time, a smile of fond approbation upon his conduct; and inwardly rejoicing, that no reproach could hereafter be thrown upon their slender means, thus honourably acquired.

Their conversation was now interrupted by the appearance of the messenger, dispatched by Sabina's relations. Covered with blushes, and in a faltering voice, the modest girl presented her destined bridegroom to the stranger; and the latter replied:

“Why then, it would seem, as if I had been sent most opportunely; for if your betrothed lover has brought no very considerable share of wealth with him from the wars, the addition which I am commissioned to offer, in the name of the collected heirs to your relation's property, cannot but be a welcome gift; and it was indeed enjoined us, by the testator's will, that we should remember you in a handsome way.”

There was something too much of arrogance, in the manner in which this piece of good fortune was tendered, to please the lofty spirit of Constantine. But the humble Sabina, wholly ignorant of the mode in which her relatives had evinced their generosity, received the communication as a special interposition of Providence, and could only hold down her head, while her

face was covered with a smile of heart-felt, grateful joy. But, as soon as she heard that the "Field of Terror" was the promised boon, with which her claim was to be liquidated, the base injustice of her relations pressed to her heart, with a painful sickening coldness; and she felt it impossible to restrain the overflowing tears of disappointed hope. Her relation, with a smile of half-suppressed contempt, expressed his regret, that she should have allowed herself to expect more than her friends had thought right to allot her; "And indeed," he observed, "this is a much larger proportion of the inheritance, than you could fairly hope to receive.

With this speech, he was about to retire, but Constantine threw himself in his way; and with that intrepid coolness, which so frequently attends a mind conscious of its own superiority, he said: "Sir! I perceive, that you and your fellows, have been pleased to convert the benevolent intentions of the deceased, into mere derision and mockery; and that it is your joint resolve to withhold a single shilling of his pro-

perty, from the worthy girl who is now my bride elect. We shall still accept your proffered boon, in the full confidence, that, under the guidance of Heaven, this dreaded "Field of Terror," may be productive of more advantages in the hands of an honest soldier, than can enter the imaginations of such a groveling, selfish set of poltroons."

The messenger, who felt rather uneasy at the tone and manner assumed by the young soldier, did not hazard a reply; and with an altered countenance, hurried out of the cottage.

Constantine now kissed away the tears from Sabina's cheeks, and hastened on the wings of joy, to fix with the curate, an early day of marriage.

After a few weeks, Constantine and Sabina were married; and entered upon their humble mode of house-keeping. The money brought from the wars was chiefly expended in the purchase of a fine yoke of oxen; part of the remainder was invested in seed and necessary articles of household furniture; and the rest reserved for daily expenditure to be doled out in

the most economical manner, till the harvest of the succeeding year should replenish their stores. But, as Constantine drove his cattle and plough to the field of labour, he looked back upon Sabina with a smiling countenance, and assured her, he was now going to sow the real seed of gold, which another year would restore with two-fold bounty. Sabina could only follow him with her anxious looks, and wish, in her heart, that he were once safely returned from the detested "Field of Terror."

It is true, he returned home, and that long before the vesper-bell had sounded; but far from being so joyful, as in the native confidence of his heart, he had promised himself in the morning. He dragged laboriously after him the fragments of his shattered plough; before him paced with difficulty, one of his oxen sorely maimed; and marks of blood were seen on his own head and shoulder. But he bore up under his numerous misfortunes, with a sound and even cheerful heart; and consoled with undiminished spirit, the grief of his weeping Sabina. "Come," said he, with a smile, "get your pickling

tubs in order ; for the goblin who reigns in the “Field of Terror,” has made us a present of a large quantity of beef. The beast I brought home with me has so injured himself in his phrenzy, that he will never more be fit for labour ; and, as for the other, he darted off into the mountains, where I had the joy of seeing him cast himself into the torrent, from whence he will never again make his appearance.

“Oh, my relations ! my wicked relations,” sobbed the disconsolate Sabina. “They have not only deprived you, by their pernicious donation, of the little property for which you so sorely travailed ; but they have also covered you with wounds, and crippled your strength.”

“That is an affair of but little consequence,” rejoined the intrepid Constantine. “The beasts managed to get me between them, just as their fury had reached its summit ; and I was determined not to relinquish my hold. But, Heaven be praised ! things might have gone a great deal worse with me ; and in the morning, I will be in the field again.”

Sabina used every means in her power, to dis-

suade her husband from his resolution ; but he only replied, by saying ; that so long as he could move an arm or a leg, the field should not lie idle. “ If we cannot plough it, we will dig it : and I am no timid beast of labour, but a tried and dauntless soldier, over whom a goblin can have no power.” He now slaughtered the wounded ox ; cut it in pieces ; and, on the following morning, while Sabina was busied in preparing it for pickle, pursued his road of the previous day, scarcely less alert and cheerful than then, though now obliged to handle the hoe and spade, instead of guiding his oxen, and well mounted plough.

This time, he returned rather late in the evening, rather pale and exhausted ; but full of spirits, and soon capable of tranquilizing his agitated wife.

This kind of labour makes one weary,” said he, with a smile ; “ for there is a sort of goblin fellow stands constantly beside me ; sometimes in one form and sometimes in another, and mocks me both with word and deed ; but he seems to feel no little surprize, that I give no

heed to his pranks ; and, it is this which fills me with fresh courage. Besides, these kind of creatures have no power over an honest man, who is labouring in his vocation.”

This continued for many days together. The persevering Constantine, pursued, without interruption, his daily labour of digging, sowing, and eradicating the weeds and useless plants which had overspread the field. It is true, the slow process of the spade, only enabled him to cultivate a small portion of the estate ; but this served to make him the more zealous and industrious in his occupation ; and he, at length, saw a crop spring up, which promised, and eventually produced, a sufficient, if not an abundant harvest. Even the toil of reaping, and transporting it from the field to the barn, was thrown entirely upon his own shoulders ; for the labourers in the vicinity would not have engaged, for any consideration, in spending a day upon the dreaded “ Field of Terror ;” and he would, on no account, permit Sabina to lend her assistance, since her advanced state of pregnancy, led him to hope for that increase of

his family, with which she shortly presented him.

The child was born, and in three years an addition was made of two more, without any change in the worldly circumstances of Constantine. By perseverance and undiminished zeal, he continued to force from the fearful "Field of Terror" an annual extension of produce, and thus redeemed his pledge to Sabina of bringing her through all her difficulties like an honest man.

One evening in autumn, as the shade of night began to set in, and Constantine was still busied with his spade, a tall robust man, of unusual size of limb, black and sooty as a charcoal-burner, and holding a furnace poker in his hand, appeared suddenly before him, and said: "Are there no cattle to be had in this part of the country, that you thus labour away with your two hands? One would suppose, by the extent of your landmarks, that you were a wealthy farmer." Constantine was perfectly aware of the stranger's character, and treated him in the same cool way, with which he usually

received the goblin of the field. He remained silent, endeavoured to withdraw his attention from the figure before him to his work, and laboured on with double ardour. But the swarthy visitor, instead of disappearing, as was the usual practice of the goblin, to present himself again in a more frightful and alarming form, remained where he stood, and in a friendly tone continued: "My good fellow, you are doing both yourself and me injustice by this line of conduct. Give me an honest and candid answer. Perhaps I may know of a remedy for your ills."

"Well then," rejoined Constantine, "in Heaven's name be it so. If you should but cajole me with these friendly words, the fault will be at your door and not at mine."

With this he began to relate the whole story of his adventures since he had taken possession of the field. He gave an undisguised recital of his first distress, a faithful representation of his just and honest indignation against the goblin who haunted his property, and detailed the difficulty he found under such continual

interruption and provocation, of supporting his family by the mere application of his hoe and spade.

The stranger gave an attentive ear to the narrative, seemed lost in thought for a few minutes, and then broke forth in the following address:

“I see, my good fellow, that you know who I am; and I look upon it as a proof of your frank and manly disposition, that you have made no concealment, that you have spoken out boldly of the displeasure you entertain towards me. To say the truth, you certainly have had sufficient cause; but in thus putting your mettle to the test, I will make a proposal which may indemnify you for a good deal of the past. It sometimes happens that, when I have fairly exhausted myself in wild and fantastic tricks, through wood, and field, and mountain, I begin to fancy I should like to attach myself to some quiet family, that I may live for half a year or so, a peaceful orderly life. What do you say to taking me for six months as your servant?”

“ It is not right, from people of your sort,” said Constantine, “ to pass your jokes upon an honest man, who reposes confidence in you.”

“ No ! no !” replied the other, “ there is no joke in it ; it is my serious intention. You will find in me a sturdy, active servant ; and, as long as I live with you, not a single spirit or spectre will venture to shew himself on the “ Field of Terror,” so that you may admit whole herds of cattle to brouze upon it.”

“ I should like the thing well enough,” rejoined Constantine, “ if I were but sure that you would keep your word ; and above all, that I were doing right in making the engagement.”

“ That must be your own affair,” said the stranger ; “ but I have never broken my word since these Ogre mountains have stood, and a mere creature of evil and malice I certainly am not. A little merry and wild and mischievous sometimes I own—but that is all !”

“ Why I almost believe,” said Constantine, “ that you are the celebrated Number-nip.”

“ Harkee !” cried the stranger, with a frown,

“ if that be your opinion, I would also have you to know, that the mighty spirit of the mountains cannot endure that name ; and that he chuses to call himself the Lord of the Hills.”

“ That would be an odd sort of a servant whom I must call my Lord of the Hills ;” said Constantine, in a tone of raillery.

“ You may call me Forester then,” rejoined his companion. Constantine looked awhile on the earth, pondering upon the course he should adopt, and at length exclaimed :

“ Well ! agreed ! I can hardly do amiss in accepting your services. I have often seen a poor senseless brute drilled into domestic use, by carrying parcels, turning spits and other household duties—why not a goblin ?”

His new servant burst into a hearty laugh at this observation, and said : “ I must acknowledge such an estimate was never before made of one of my family. But I am not the less pleased with it, so give me your hand my honoured master.”

Constantine made a further condition, that his new servant was, on no account, to inform

Sabina or the children of his connexion with the "Field of Terror," or rather of his descent from the caverns and shafts of the Ogre mountains; nor was he, on any occasion, to exhibit any of his fearful goblin tricks about the house or court-yard; and, as Forester promised all that was required of him with every token of good faith, the bargain was soon at an end, and they now proceeded home.

Sabina, after a time, wondered at the increasing prosperity of their domestic economy; and was not wholly free from feelings of secret dread at their swarthy gigantic assistant. At first the children never ventured outside the door, when they perceived him at work in the yard or garden; but, by degrees, his friendly industrious habits gained upon them all; and when he occasionally indulged in a fit of fantastic merriment, by chasing the dog or the poultry round the house, it was considered more amusing than surprising; and a single look from Constantine was, at any time, sufficient to bring him within the proper limits of order. In full reliance upon the promises of the mountain

spirit, Constantine applied the slender savings of many years to the purchase of a fresh yoke of oxen ; and with his newly amended plough drove to the field in the highest glee. Sabina looked after him with an anxious sorrowful countenance, and with an equally anxious mind awaited his return in the evening, fearing a renewal of the same disaster, the same disappointed hopes, or that his personal injuries, this time, might be more dangerous and alarming than before. But with the sound of the vesper-bell, Constantine came singing through the village, driving his sleek well fed yoke before him, kissed his wife and children in the fulness of his joy, and shook his servant cordially by the hand.

Forester now frequently went to the field alone, while Constantine remained behind engaged about the yard or garden. A considerable piece of the "Field of Terror" was cleared for cultivation ; and, to the great astonishment of the village neighbours, and the equal discontent and envy of Sabina's selfish relations, every thing assumed an air of prosperity and

comfort. It is true, Constantine, when alone, often reflected that all this could be but of short duration, “and Heaven knows” he exclaimed, “how I shall manage with the harvest; for Forester’s time will then be out, and the goblin of the field may chuse to appear with replenished spirits.” But he considered that the gathering in of the crop was a labour which, of itself, gave additional vigour to the workman’s arm and heart; and it was possible that Forester, for old acquaintance sake, might keep the land free from guests; as in fact, at times of cheerful relaxation, the latter seemed to imply.

In the course of time, the needful labours of the field were completed. Winter arrived, and Constantine daily drove to the forest for a stock of fuel and wood. On one of these days it so chanced that Sabina was entreated to visit a poor widow in the village, who lay dangerously ill; and whom, as far as their increasing means admitted, Constantine and his wife, had been accustomed to relieve. She was at a loss how to dispose of the children during her absence,

but Forester offering his services, with whose stories the children were always delighted, and with whom they were ever pleased to remain, she proceeded on her charitable purpose without further hesitation.

About an hour after her departure, Constantine returned from the forest ; and having disposed of his waggon in the out-house, and prepared the stall for his cattle ; he proceeded towards the house to revive his numbed and frozen limbs by the blaze of a cheerful fire. On approaching the door, his ear was saluted by a cry of painful distress from his children. He darted into the house, and, on entering the sitting-room, found the children creeping behind the stove, and crying aloud for help, while Forester was wildly jumping about the room with shouts of violent laughter, making the most hideous and disgusting faces, and with a crown of sparks and fiery rays playing about his head.

“ What is all this ? ” said Constantine, in a tone of indignant anger, and the supernatural decorations of Forester’s head disappeared ; his

fantastic merriment instantly ceased, and he began to excuse himself with great humility for thus trying to amuse the children. But the children ran towards their father, complaining that Forester had first of all told them a number of most horrific stories, and that then he had assumed a variety of frightful disguises, sometimes appearing with the head of a ram, sometimes with that of a dog.

“Enough ! enough !” exclaimed Constantine. “Away, sirrah ! you and I no longer remain under the same roof.” With this he seized Forester by the arm, and shoved him violently out of the house, desiring the children to remain quietly in the room, and to dismiss their fears.

Forester suffered all this without uttering a single word of expostulation ; but, as soon as he found himself alone with Constantine in the open court, he said with a smiling countenance : “ I hope, master, we shall make the matter up. I know I have done a very foolish thing, but I assure you it shall never happen again. Some-

how or other the old mad fit came upon me and I forgot myself."

"For that very reason, because you can forget yourself," rejoined Constantine, "we part. You might terrify my children into a paroxysm of phrenzy, and, as I have said, our contract here terminates."

"My time is not up;" said Forester, in a dogged tone, "*I will* go into the house."

"Not a step further—at your peril!" cried Constantine. "You have broken the agreement by your cursed goblin tricks, and all that I can do is to pay you your full wages. Here, take it and pack yourself off."

"My full wages?" said the mountain-spirit, with a sneer of bitter contempt. Have you never seen my stores of gold in the caverns of yonder hills?"

"I do this more on my own account than yours," said Constantine, "no man shall call me his debtor." And so saying, he forced the money into his servant's pocket.

"And what is to be done with the Field of

Terror?" enquired Forester, in a solemn but almost ireful tone.

"That which it may please God:" rejoined Constantine. "Twenty fields of terror are of no importance to me in comparison with the safety of a single hair of my poor children's heads. Take yourself away, or I shall give you that, you will long have cause to remember!"

"Gently!" cried the mountain-spirit, "gently! my friend. When any of my family condescend to assume a human form, they chuse one of rather stern materials. You might chance to get an under birth in this same fray, and in that case Heaven be merciful unto you!"

"That it has ever been," said Constantine, "and has also given me a frame of no slender power. Away to your mountains, disgusting monster! I now warn you for the last time."

Excited by this reproach to a pitch of violent fury, Forester sprang upon Constantine, and an obstinate fight ensued. They struggled about the yard for a considerable time, each using every means in his power to overthrow

his adversary, without victory declaring herself upon either side ; till at length Constantine, by his superior skill in wrestling, managed to bring his opponent to the earth, and having placed his knee upon the chest of his fallen foe, began to pummel him most furiously, exclaiming : “ I’ll teach you to attack your master, my precious Lord of the Hills.”

The Lord of the Hills, however, laughed so heartily at this address, that Constantine conceiving his manly efforts to be the subject of derision, only laid on with redoubled vigour, till at length the former exclaimed : “ For God’s sake hold ! I am not laughing at you, I am laughing at myself and I humbly beg your pardon !”

“ That is another sort of affair,” said Constantine, as he rose up and assisted his conquered adversary to regain his legs.

“ I have now learnt what human life is, from the very foundation upwards,” said the latter, still continuing his noisy laughter. “ I doubt if any of my kindred have ever pursued the study so profoundly. But harkee ! my good fellow, you must admit that I carried on the

war in an honourable way. For as you will see yourself, I might with ease have called in half a dozen mountain-spirits to my assistance, though amidst all this laughter, I know not how I should have set about it.

Constantine with a serious air, now looked at the still laughing Number-nip, and said: "It is clear you must entertain a grudge against me, and this will not only be repaid me at the Field of Terror," but in many an evil chance elsewhere; still I cannot repent of what I have done. I have only exercised a paternal duty on behalf of my children, and were the thing to do over again, I should, on mature reflection, repeat it.

"No, no ! said Number-nip laughingly, don't make yourself uneasy. I have had quite enough for once. Cultivate the Field of Terror from year to year, at your own will and pleasure. I here pass my word that no fearful phantom shall be seen upon it from this day forwards, as long as the Ogre mountains stand. And so fare ye well, my honest, but rigid master !"

With this he gave a friendly nod of adieu, and disappeared; nor was he ever more seen by Constantine. But Number-nip kept his word, and even more. An unusual degree of prosperity attended all the labours of his former employer, and Constantine soon became the richest farmer in the village. And when his children were permitted to play in the "Field of Terror"—a spot which both they and Sabina now visited without the slightest dread, they sometimes related in the evening, that Forester had come to see them, and told them some of his former amusing stories. On such occasions they generally found their pockets filled with either comfits, toys, or pieces of pretty money.

ELFIN-LAND.

“ **W**HERE is our Maria ?” enquired Martin.

“ She is playing abroad, yonder upon the green,” replied his wife, “ with little Andrew our neighbours’ son.

“ I hope they will not stray away, and lose themselves during our absence from home. Go, housewife, and warn them to heed how they roam not far.”

The mother immediately hastened towards the children, and bade them to beware how they wandered from the spot. “ Fear not,” returned the boy, “ that we shall venture near the Goblins’ Wood, we are too much afraid of approaching it.”

Thus assured of their caution in this respect,

the good dame hastened with her husband to the field in order to assist him, it being the hay season; for Martin farmed a little ground, and had the prospect of being able, not only to support his wife and child more comfortably than the neighbouring peasants, but also of laying somewhat by, every year. As they were proceeding along, he observed to his wife, that the spot which they now occupied was unusually fertile; the village itself resembling an orchard, so thickly was it studded with fruit-trees, while the ground was covered with the richest herbage and flowers. "Nay," continued he, "every object hereabouts wears an aspect of cheerfulness; even the very cottages themselves have an air of neatness and comfort, which I have never observed in any other place. The sky has a dye of deeper, clearer blue: the woods are arrayed in a livery of a brighter verdure."

"It is true," returned Bridget, "but, as soon as one crosses yon stream, the appearance of the country is suddenly changed. There nature is not only wild, but absolutely bar-

ren. A strange dreariness marks the whole territory,—our village, on the contrary, is admired by all strangers for its singular beauty.”

“And yet,” observed the husband, “yon gloomy wood of firs, has something in it strangely melancholy. I know not why, but I never either pass by, or look upon it without feeling a secret dread. Look ! how dismal it appears, and what a contrast it presents to the rest of the landscape.”

“In sooth it does, I should fancy it cannot be inhabited.”

“Aye, so should I, although of that I wot not very clearly, seeing that none of our village cares ever to approach the spot.”

“An it be the abode of aught, it cannot be of christian souls : perhaps it may be the residence——”

“Hush ! dame, hush !” interrupted Martin, “I would not that we speak ill of the place. Or who knows but that we repent it ?”

They had, by this time, reached the field ; where we will leave them, while we examine more narrowly the subject of their discourse,

and of their dread. The gloomy spot, sometimes denominated by the peasants the Goblins' Wood, lay somewhat apart from the village, within a hollow, to which the dark trees, with their stunted foliage, imparted a terrifying character of cheerlessness and horror. On approaching sufficiently near, a few miserable hovels might be descried, whose ruinous, mouldering walls bespoke not only decay but desertion. Of population there was no sign, save that at times, some miserable crone, clad in the attire of extreme wretchedness, and of truly hideous aspect, might be seen carrying a brat, squallid and deformed as herself. Sometimes too, a large black monster whose form could hardly be termed human, was seen to enter some one of the huts, attended by a dog of appearance equally horrible. At other times, strange forms might be perceived crouching around a dimly blazing fire, whose lurid flame just served to render their outline discernable. No one of the village, however, ventured to approach sufficiently near to mark these shapes of wild horror, or else not even the magic

beauty that surrounded their own dwellings would have induced them longer to abide in the vicinity of such a scene.

The little Maria and her companion, after playing about for some time in the meadow, where they had been plucking daisies, suddenly flung away what they had been so carefully collecting, and began a race in which the former soon lost sight of her competitor. "He has certainly entered the wood," exclaimed she to herself, "surely I too may venture in." At the same moment she perceived a little dog, which by wagging its tail in a friendly manner appeared to invite her to the spot.

Taking courage, therefore, she scrambled over the low mound which seemed to inclose the wood; but how great was her astonishment when, having entered the latter, instead of finding a dismal forest, choaked with tangled thorns and underwood, she perceived herself to be in a delightful garden, where flowers of every hue, and of the most odoriferous fragrance, grew in the utmost luxuriance. Butterflies

of surprising brilliancy, whose hues rivalled the blaze of the glow-worm, added to the enchantment of the scene, while birds of most splendid plumage, suspended from lofty trees, in golden cages, completed the fascination by the melody of their songs. Clothed in robes of dazzling white, beautiful children were seen disporting in this fairy paradise: some were playing with lambs whose fleeces seemed to rival the golden curling clouds that veil the setting sun; others were employed in feeding the birds, or in gathering the flowers that presented themselves in such profusion, and in forming them into tasteful chaplets and festoons, while others were feasting on the delicious fruitage which loaded the trees. No hovel was now to be discerned, but in their stead there was seen a structure of the costliest materials, and the richest architecture. Columns of jasper, and the rarest marble reared high their golden capitals, and seemed to complete the effect of this scene, where the choicest productions of nature were combined with the most gorgeous efforts of art.

Maria stood for some moments struck motionless with astonishment; as, however, her surprise was accompanied with extreme delight, she soon recovered herself sufficiently to address one of the children whom she there saw, with the familiar confidence natural to her age.

“Art thou come hither, at length, to be our companion?” enquired the little creature, to whom she addressed herself. “Full oft have we beheld thee running and gamboling without the boundary of our abode.”

“But I have been told strange tales by Andrew, who has frequently said, that only gypsies and goblins were to be found here;—but then, from without, the place has, to be sure, a very horrible appearance.”

“Do but remain with us,” replied the child, “and you will discover what varied delights attend us here.” She then plucked a certain fruit of most delicious flavour, and presented it to Maria, who having tasted of it, instantly forgot the anxiety her absence might cause, and felt as if she was to remain in this new habitation.

Her companion now conducted her to a beautiful female, richly attired in drapery of surprising lustre and brilliancy, and decorated with the most costly ornaments, such as Maria had never before seen. The lady welcomed her affectionately, and inquired whether she was content to exchange her parents' cottage for such a residence and to dwell with them.

"Most willingly," exclaimed the delighted child. "Here are already so many charming flowers, so many sweet fruits; that our garden, looks sterile and dreary, although I once deemed it a paradise, compared with what then appeared to me, a desolate spot, and uninhabited, save by hissing reptiles, or beings even still more foul."

The lady smiled and withdrew, leaving her to the numerous little companions, who now presented themselves to Maria, requesting that she would become the associate of their sports. Some fondly caressed her, and invited her to join them in a dance; others sought to divert her by their songs, and others by curious toys. With none, however, did she feel inclined to

become so familiar as with Zerina, the one whom she had first addressed on entering the garden.

“Come hither,” said Zerina, “and I will instruct you in an amusement such as you will acknowledge to be most wondrous.” So saying, she ran swiftly to the palace, and immediately returned with a little box, filled with bright, glittering seeds, fine as dust. Then taking some grains of it in her hand, she scattered them upon the grass, which thereupon began to wave and heave; and bushes started up from the earth, laden with roses of the brightest tints, and most fragrant perfume, so that the whole air breathed of their odour.

Maria also strewed some of the dust on the ground, and lilies and tulips of the richest dyes sprang up instantaneously, together with a diversity of flowers still more beautiful, and not resembling any with which we are acquainted. Upon a signal made by Zerina, they suddenly disappeared, and were as quickly replaced by others. Having displayed her skill for some time, and exhausted the magic contents of her

box, Zerina bade the young stranger prepare herself to witness something still more surprising. Upon this, she buried two fir-apples in the ground, and stamped them firmly down. —“ Fear not,” said she to Maria, “ but clasp me firmly.” The latter did as commanded, and immediately found herself borne upwards to a considerable height, by two pine trees which arose from the ground, and carried them up on their topmost boughs. And while the two children thus stood waving backwards and forwards with the motion of the lofty trees, as they sported with the evening zephyrs, their companions sportively climbed up the tapering stems, and attacked Zerina and Maria, uttering all the while, loud exclamation of frolic mirth. During this contest, some of them slipped and fell, but instead of being precipitated head-long, sank gently to the earth, wavering to and fro as a light feather drops to the ground. At length, Maria became alarmed at her situation ; her companion, therefore, sang a few words, and the trees forthwith sank again in the same manner in which they

had risen, and deposited them in safety on the ground.

They then entered the palace, where, in a spacious circular hall of the richest and most fanciful architecture, they found a number of beautiful females of various ages, who were regaling upon the most delicious fruits, while notes of the most ravishing melody formed a fitting concert to this fairy banquet. The dome of the apartment was o'ercanopied with foliage and festoons arranged in the most tasteful manner ; and between these were represented the figures of little genii or children, in every variety of attitude. These figures moved sympathiously, as it were, with the music, and the colours too, became more or less bright as the tones increased or died away. At one time, the green hues of the foliage would sparkle with all the clear vivid brilliancy of the emerald, then again they would nearly fade away so as almost to disappear. Suddenly would the flowers glow with the dye of the ruby ; and azure and purple, and gold, commingle in intense lustre ; the naked children would disport in wanton mo-

tions, while the sparkling of eyes, the ivory of teeth, and the warm crimson of lips, imparted a gay and joyous sense of life to the whole scene.

A flight of brazen steps conducted from this hall into a subterraneous apartment, where lay much gold and silver, together with jewels that sparkled in every variety of tint. Along the walls, stood a row of beauteous vases, all apparently filled with treasures, and the most valuable rarities. Gold might here be seen worked into every shape, and dazzled the eye with its surpassing polish. A number of dwarfs were busily occupied in sorting out heaps of coin, and arranging them in different vessels: others of most grotesque figure, hump-backed, and with long red noses, in comparison with which, the ruby would seem pale, and of complexions rivalling in dye, the precious metal committed to their charge, were employed in bringing in sacks of gold, whose shining contents they forthwith spread out upon the floor. In their active hurry, they would frequently jostle against, and overthrow each other; and, upon

such occasion, they would utter strange, wild sounds, accompanied by gestures equally singular. When these extraordinary little beings perceived that Maria laughed at their ugliness and their antic motions, they mocked at her with the oddest grimaces possible.

At the further end of the apartment, sate a little shrivelled old man of most diminutive figure, whom Zerina saluted with the utmost courtesy; to which, he replied by a grave bow with his head. In one of his hands he bore a sceptre, and upon his brow, he wore a rich crown: all the other dwarfs appeared to reverence him as their sovereign, and to watch for his commands.

“What bringeth ye hither?” demanded he, as the children approached towards where he was seated, in a tone that caused Maria to tremble.

“We come merely to behold thy treasures, my good father,” returned Zerina.

“Aye!” murmured out the old man, “I deemed it was some such folly. Will there ne’er be any end to this impertinent curiosity?”

Then, without bestowing any farther notice upon the intruders, he turned to his dwarfs, and continued to give them directions, during which occupation, he was not sparing of his reproofs, which he uttered in no very mild tone.

“Who is this austere old man?” asked Maria.

“He is lord of the mines and metals,” replied her companion.

On quitting this place, they appeared to have regained the open air, for they arrived at the bank of a large stream, yet Maria observed, that she could perceive neither sun nor other luminary whence the light proceeded, nor any sky above her head. A small boat approached: they stepped into it, and Zerina steered the vessel with great dexterity. They proceeded at a rapid rate, and, on gaining the middle of the water, Maria observed, that a thousand little channels and streams branched out in every direction.

“Those streams to the right;” said Zerina, “serve to water your garden. They are the cause of its unusual luxuriance and fertility.”

Proceeding a little farther, they discerned

swarms of little children rising up from the waves, and sporting in an what appeared their native element. Many of them were crowned with chaplets of rushes and water lilies; others were fantastically ornamented with coral in various devices; and others again were sounding conchs and shells, making a wondrous, but not unpleasing melody, that caused the shores to re-echo. Among these infant forms, were also seen others, of beautiful females, emerging from the dark crystal waves, as the moon bursts forth through a sable cloud, whose edges then suddenly glitter with fleecy silver. The little creatures frolicked around the beauties of the water, bounding from one to the other, with loud cries of joy, and caressing them with eager delight; and, upon perceiving the stranger, all hastened to salute her, surrounding the vessel in a tumultuous, joyous manner, like a troop of bacchantes.

The vessel, in the meanwhile, forcing its way through this crowd, entered the channel of a small stream which grew narrower and nar-

rower. At length, it stopped; and Zerina struck the rocky bank, which immediately opened after the manner of a door, where on alighting, they were received by a female figure, whose complexion and drapery were entirely of a glowing red colour.

“Are our friends all well?” enquired Zerina.
“Is every thing right?”

“Perfectly so,” returned their conductress, “there is, as you will shortly find, no lack of mirth; you will be delighted too with the delightful warmth of our abode.”

Thus saying, she led them down a winding stair-case, and Maria suddenly found herself in a hall of such amazing splendour, that, for some few moments, she was quite dazzled by the brilliancy of the scene. Flame-coloured tapestries shed over the walls, a rich purple glow of various tints: they were apparently embroidered all over with figures of the most surprising workmanship; yet, what most excited the wonder of the newly-arrived visitor, was, to perceive that these figures kept dancing

up and down, with gestures expressive of the utmost delight. They were all of most surpassing beauty as to forms and proportions, and quite transparent, so that they appeared to be of flame-tinted crystal; and one might imagine that he perceived the blood playing within their veins. They too, appeared to welcome Maria by signs, expressive of friendliness and pleasure, and the latter would fain have approached nearer, had not Zerina forcibly prevented her; assuring her, that to touch them would prove her destruction, for they were shapes of fire.

“What meanest thou?” enquired Maria of her companion; “how can these beautiful creatures exist in such an element, or endure the torture of it?”

“They might as well demand, how we can exist in the air? for that to them is certain death. But, behold! how they enjoy that heat which is congenial to their natures! how exultingly they laugh and shout!”

“But what is their employment?”

“ They are the spirits, whose office it is to distribute the fires which burn with the entrails of the earth ; they conduct its fertilizing streams through various channels, and thus prepare the kindly heat that concocts the various metals, and vivifies the roots of herb and plant. But come, this scorching warmth may prove too powerful for your frame : let us therefore return to the garden.”

On repairing thither, they found the scene entirely changed. The moon shed a silvery hue upon the flowers ; the birds had ceased their warblings ; and the children lay slumbering beneath the leafy shadow of various shrubs, or in little fairy bowers. Maria and her companions however, experienced no weariness, but wandered forth to enjoy the balmy serenity of this delicious night, conversing with each other, on subjects of varied interest.

As the dawn approached, Maria requested her friend to conduct her towards the boundary of this domain, in order that she might behold again her own fields, and compare their ap-

pearance with that of this elysian territory. Zerina readily complied with her solicitation, saying, that she should thus have an opportunity of shewing her their sentinels, who constantly kept watch there. After passing through parterres filled with the most delightful flowers, and through groves that resounded with the song of the nightingale, they arrived at the borders of this fairy territory.

“How happens it,” asked Maria, “that your domain is so extensive, when viewed from without, it appears such an inconsiderable spot?”

“I cannot satisfy your curiosity as to this circumstance; but so it is.”

Maria observed that the adjacent country seemed covered with a thick, foggy air, and that a cold piercing wind seemed to blow from that side. Her companion then called her attention to certain strange little figures that were keeping watch on the trees. Their countenances were white, and of singular form, bearing considerable resemblance to that of the owl; they were clad in thick, shaggy

mantles that completely enveloped their bodies and held over their heads a sort of umbrella formed of some species of skin. But what added still more to their grotesque appearance, were large wings like those of a bat, which they kept continually flapping. Though much inclined to laugh at their odd shapes, Maria could not help feeling some alarm.

“These,” said her companion, “are our faithful and trusty sentinels: the motion which they continually make with their wings is intended to cause a feeling of horror, to seize all who approach hither. Those umbrellas which you perceive, are for the purpose of fencing off rain and fog, and wind, which thus never penetrate our atmosphere. Here we know no change of seasons, save of spring and summer.

“But,” enquired Maria, as they returned, “who are ye? or have ye no appellation by which ye are known?”

“We are called Elves,” replied Zerina, with a smile, “and I have heard say that we are greatly talked about in the world.”

They were now suddenly interrupted by a great tumult, and every one was seen rushing towards the palace, exclaiming, "The beautiful bird is arrived!" while joyful sounds of music were heard to proceed from the interior of the edifice. Maria entered with her companion, and found the large rotunda completely filled with the crowd, who were all attentively looking up towards the dome, where a bird of immense size and most brilliant plumage was sailing slowly round. At intervals the music became livelier, and then the colours of the bird and the splendour of the light increased in proportion. At length the music ceased and the bird ascended, and seated himself upon a lustre of crystal that hung pendant from the centre of the dome. His plumage was purple and green in every diversity of tint, interspersed with stripes of gold; and, on his head, was a crest of small feathers that sparkled like diamonds of the finest water. His beak was in hue like the ruby, and his legs might be compared to the sapphire for their lustrous blue. When he stirred, these

colours seemed to commingle, and then separate again, in the most wonderful manner. But, if his beauty enchanted the eye with its exceeding fairness and brilliancy, the melodious music which flowed from his throat actually ravished the soul ; for, compared with these sounds, the notes of the nightingale would seem harsh and discordant. Tears of rapture forced themselves from the eyes of all present, so extatic was the pleasure which penetrated their bosoms as they listened. And when he had ceased singing, all present prostrated themselves before him ; at length, having flown majestically round the hall, he disappeared through the entrance.

“ What is the meaning of all this jubilee and rejoicing ?” asked Maria, addressing herself to her companion. “ The king is about to arrive ; and whenever he comes, there is always prosperity and joy :—besides, there are many of us who have never yet beheld him. Long have we been anxiously awaiting his arrival, more anxiously than ye look for the approach of spring, after a long, tedious winter ;—and

now he hath just sent his messenger to announce his coming."

"But the bird?" enquired Maria.

"Aye, that bird of wondrous beauty, which thou hast just beheld, is the Phoenix, which dwells afar off in Arabia, and makes its nest upon a tree, which like into the bird itself, has no equal on this earth. By you mortals this bird is so rarely seen, that his appearance is noted down in your chronicles, and is supposed to portend the most extraordinary events. But now, my friend, it is necessary that you should depart, since it is not permitted you to be present when the king arrives."

The beautiful lady, to whom Maria was at first introduced, now approached her through the crowd, and, retiring with her into a leafy bower, informed her that, in consequence of their monarch's arrival, she would be obliged to quit them. "His presence," continued she, "will shed a kindly influence not only here, but on all the surrounding territory:—your fields and gardens will be more fertile, your brooks and streams will flow with water limpid

as the purest crystal; the breezes will play more balmly; nor will tempest and hail, during this period, lay waste your tillage. Take this ring, maiden, in token of our amity, and as a memorial of our kindness; yet beware that thou mentionest to no one what thou hast beheld whilst sojourning with us: for, shouldst thou do so, we should all quit this place, and then thy land would be consigned to barrenness."

Her companions now appeared to conduct Maria to the borders of their Elfin territory, where, having taken a sorrowful leave of them, she found herself once again on the other side the boundary, and looking back, saw instead of the delightful landscape she had just quitted, only the dismal fir grove that seemed the fit residence of midnight hag, or unholy spirit.

"How alarmed my parents will be," thought Maria, as she hastened homewards, "at my long absence since yesterday; yet I must not venture to inform them, where I have been, or the wonders I have witnessed." She now rapidly

approached the cottage of her parents, but was greatly surprized to perceive that the trees which, on the preceding day were covered with luxuriant foliage, were now quite leafless. The dwelling itself too appeared considerably altered; nor did her astonishment at all abate on entering it. She perceived there a man whom she almost immediately recognized to be her father, though much altered; but there were also there an old woman and youth, both of whom were unknown to her. "Father," said "she, where then is my mother, for I do not see her here?" "Your mother!" exclaimed the female. "Why you cannot be—and yet I see that you are our long-lost child, our Maria whom we long since deemed to be dead."

All now hastened to embrace her, and her parents shed tears of delight at thus regaining her. Maria, in the mean time, was mute with astonishment; she perceived that she was nearly as tall as her parents; she perceived too, that the old woman was indeed her mother, but the cause of this extraordinary metamorphosis was what she could not comprehend. After a

short pause, by way of diverting her embarrassment, she asked who the young man was?

“Hast thou then forgotten our neighbour’s son, Andrew? Yet seven years’ absence has wrought as great a change in him as in thyself. But where hast thou been during so long a period, or wherefore hast thou never given us any tidings respecting thyself?”

“How! seven years!” said Maria, quite confounded at what she heard, unable to account for it, and at the same time afraid to demand any explanation.

“Aye,” said Andrew, smiling, and taking her kindly by the hand, “it is even so. Hast thou forgotten the race we had together in the meadow yonder? I lost sight of thee almost immediately after we started, nor could I find thee any where. And now, lo! after so many years thou art returned. Thy race must have been quite round the globe I think.”

Again she was earnestly questioned as to the cause of her long absence; but reflecting on the secrecy to which she had been enjoined, ventured not to utter a syllable. At length by

questioning her, and putting the tale, as it were, into her mouth, they prevailed upon her to confess that, she had lost her way, and had been found by charitable persons who had taken her with them, out of compassion for her forlorn condition; and that after the lapse of several years, her benefactors dying, she had met with an opportunity of returning home.

“Well, my dear child,” exclaimed her mother, “it is now sufficient joy for us, that we have found thee again. Let us now therefore think of nothing but of celebrating thy return in the best manner we are able.”

Maria, notwithstanding the joy which she saw diffused over every countenance, and the kindness, with which the best cheer the house afforded was brought out for their evening repast, could not help feeling depressed and melancholy. Every thing around her, neat as it was, appeared mean and gloomy when contrasted with the splendour to which she had been accustomed in Elfin-Land. She was therefore not sorry, when the moment arrived that dismissed her to her chamber.

There she endeavoured to recover herself from the strange change she had so lately experienced, and mused much upon the singular events which had befallen her; for her return seemed to her even still more inexplicable than the circumstance of being admitted into that fairy region.

Her return, however, did not appear to diminish Andrew's visits, who seemed to forget that his company was not now so necessary as formerly, to cheer the solitude of Maria's parents; but they were now, probably, intended to dissipate the melancholy of the daughter. Nor were his efforts altogether fruitless, since Maria, shortly after regained her wonted composure and serenity, and ere many months had passed away, consented to become Andrew's bride.

Their cottage and little garden were the admiration of the village; so elegant was the neatness of the former, and so thriving the latter; yet in spite of the smiling objects which surrounded her, Maria could not help dwelling upon those wonders which she had

witnessed in that mysterious land, of whose vicinity the villagers little dreamed. It wounded her feelings whenever she heard either her father or husband speak of the witches and goblins, which were reputed by the country people to dwell in the horrible, desart wood, where no human foot dared to approach ; yet did she never venture to contradict them on such occasions, fearful of what might be the result of such indiscretion. In this manner, did a year pass away, when Maria was comforted with the birth of a daughter, whom, out of attachment to her benefactors, the Elves, she named Elfrida.

In a short time the little creature became her chief solace and care, and her delight was extreme to witness the intelligence which it displayed from the first dawn of infancy ; its gentle, placid serenity, and the premature docility which it uniformly manifested. Nor was its beauty at all less remarkable than any of its other qualities : on the contrary, its diminutive, sprightly figure, obtained for it the appellation of the fairy-child—a name of which its

mother felt the peculiar import from its striking resemblance to those beautiful infantine forms which had been her companions during her abode in Elfin-Land. Elfrida did not willingly associate with the other children of the village, but rather appeared averse to their noisy mirth, which was ill-suited to her gentle spirit. Never did she seem more happy than when permitted to retire to some shadowed part of the garden, where she would amuse herself either with a book or needle-work. She was frequently observed too, to sit in a musing posture as if buried in reflections unknown to children of her age ;—at times also to rise hastily, and walk to and fro, whilst uttering her thoughts aloud.

This somewhat extraordinary behaviour caused no concern to her parents, who rejoiced to see her always cheerful, although never indulging in the lively glee common to other children; for they were content to find that her health no ways suffered by these secluded habits. Her grand-mother, Bridget, however, regarded her reluctance to join in the sports natural to her age, as a circumstance of no favourable omen.

“This child,” she would frequently observe, “is by far too wise for her years. She seems already to have attained the prudence of mature age, and will doubtless soon be summoned hence ; for, to say the truth, she seems too good and too wise to be formed for this world of ours.”

One day, as her mother was changing her attire, she found hanging round Elfrida’s neck, to which it was attached by a silken thread, a piece of pure gold, of singular form, which she immediately recognized as resembling those which she had seen in the subterraneous caverns of Elfin-Land, where the little yellow dwarfs were depositing their treasures and storing them up. Elfrida betrayed great fear at this discovery taking place, but confessed, at last, that she had found it in the garden, where, struck with its singularity and beauty, she had determined to preserve it, and constantly wear it, at the same time assuring her mother that she found extraordinary satisfaction in doing so ; and she then entreated so earnestly that it might be restored to her, that the latter was fain to comply with her request.

Shortly after this occurrence, as Maria was watching Elfrida, she perceived, to her great astonishment, Zerina familiarly seated beside her, and earnestly conversing with her. The little Elfin embraced the child affectionately, and said: "When thy mother was a child, and tarried with us, even thus was I wont to be her companion; but you mortals so quickly out-grow the happy years of childhood. Do thou, my sweet Elfrida, continue to be a child, like unto one of us."

"True," replied Elfrida, "but as the blossom, lovely as it is, disappears in order to be replaced by the fruit, even so doth the delightful season of childhood pass away. The fruit may be more valuable than the blossom, and the mature counsel of age excel the careless gaiety of youth; yet, is there a charm belonging to the latter more delightful than aught that the former can bestow. I would that I were permitted to abide with thee even as my mother was."

"Since the arrival of our king," replied Zerina, "this is not possible; nevertheless,

Sweet, I will visit thee as frequently as possible, for no one will know of my visits. We Elfin beings can pass through the air unseen by any, and it will joy me much to be thy playmate and companion so long as thou continuest to be a child; but, after that period, such may not be:—we must then separate for ever.”

“Well,” said Elfrida, “let us now quit this discourse, and amuse ourselves informing flowers.”

Hereupon Zerina took from her bosom the well-known box; and, on her scattering some seeds in the ground, there presently sprang up a beautiful rose-bush laden with flowers.

“How I grieve,” said Elfrida, “to think that these beauteous roses must so quickly fade; is there nothing which can avert so sad a destiny?”

“Yes,” said the Elfin-child, taking off one of the flowers, and breathing upon it; “this will cause the blossom to retain its freshness, even for the space of one annual revolution of the sun.”

“Then so long will I preserve it as a remembrance of thy love,” replied Elfrida. “But see, the sun is about to descend: I must therefore return home.”

The scene which she had just witnessed induced Maria to regard her child more affectionately, if possible, than ever; and she now determined to watch her more narrowly in order to have the pleasure of thus again beholding Zerina, and witnessing her attachment to the little Elfrida; a circumstance every way most flattering to her feelings. Hardly a day elapsed without her finding them engaged either in serious discourse, or affectionate play, such as well beseemed their age. It once chanced that Zerina asked her young companion whether she should not like to fly through the air like her; and, on Elfrida expressing her wish to do so, she lifted her up from the ground about as high as the tops of the trees. Maria’s alarm now got the better of her prudence, so that she could not forbear crying out and discovering herself; upon which

Zerina, having first carefully replaced her charge upon the ground, disappeared with a gesture somewhat indicative of displeasure.

Still Zerina did not entirely relinquish her attentions to the little Elfrida, but would occasionally, although less frequently than formerly, resort thither to play with her as usually. A circumstance, however, soon occurred that broke off this intercourse for ever. Vexed at so frequently hearing her husband speak of the goblins that were wont to haunt the fir grove, Maria could not forbear revealing to him all that had happened to herself in Elfin-Land; and, in order to convince him more satisfactorily of the truth of her story, she conducted him to the spot where he might observe Zerina and Elfrida playing together with all the unreserved familiarity of childhood. But, no sooner did the Elfin perceive Andrew than, suddenly quitting Elfrida, she assumed the form of a raven, and immediately flew away towards the grove.

This seemed an omen of most sinister import, and the little Elfrida wept bitterly, refusing to

be comforted, and lamenting that she should never behold her darling companion any more. Night arrived, but with circumstances that caused their apprehensions; for, on a sudden, a furious tempest seemed to rage among the firs of the lonely grove, almost threatening to tear up every tree by its roots; while strange birds were seen to hover over it, flapping their wings as if in extreme distress, and uttering cries of dole and lamentation. The inhabitants of the cottage listened aghast to these terrific sounds, fearing lest some terrible visitation was about to overtake them for their unintentional offence towards the Elves. At length the fury of the elements subsided; the cries gradually died away, and the morning sun illuminated the eastern clouds with their wonted glow. But, on looking out, in order to ascertain the devastation of the preceding night, Maria and her husband found that the surrounding scenery wore a very different aspect from that which it was wont to do. Compared with their former luxuriant vegetation, the herbs and trees seemed blighted, or parched

with long draught; the brooks were nearly dried up; and a strange melancholy feeling seemed to pervade every object, while, on the contrary, the late so dismal fir grove was even far less gloomy than the rest.

Many of the villagers now arrived, eager to relate the tidings of the night; some of them said, that, in consequence of the extraordinary commotion of the elements, which was raging without, they had risen, and had perceived strange figures pass from the fir grove, some in formidable, others in antic shapes. But no one told a tale more full of mystery and supernatural incident than the old ferryman belonging to the river. He informed his astonished hearers that, shortly after midnight, a dread, gigantic figure came to his cottage, informing him that he must have the use of his boat until the dawn, bidding him, at the same time, to make no enquiries, and assuring him that he should be amply rewarded for the loan of his vessel. The ferryman durst not to object to this request of his singular and unseasonable visitant, and promised not to follow him, since

such was his command. He nevertheless contrived to observe him from a window of his cottage, when, to his great astonishment, he saw him ferry across the stream troops of little figures, then again others of gigantic dimensions, but airy semblance. At one time the vessel was filled with strange, ugly dwarfs, who seemed to carry certain vessels with them, which they carefully watched. At length, just before the first glimmer of day, he ferried over one who appeared to be an aged man on a little white steed, arrayed in the trappings of most extraordinary magnificence, for it seemed as if the housings, bridle, and saddle were of pure gold, set with the most costly jewels. Nought could equal the brilliancy of that figure, which seemed to shine through the shades of night with a lustre proceeding from itself, so as to be clearly visible, whereas the rest could be but dimly descried. The next morning, on proceeding to his boat, which he found in its accustomed place, he perceived lying in it a piece of pure gold, marked with certain mystic characters, which was the reward promised him by that unknown

man—if such, indeed, he were—who hired his vessel.

The ferryman's tale filled his auditors with silent astonishment, none caring, save by a few abrupt words, or some significant gesture, to hint his opinion as to these supernatural occurrences. As for the little Elfrida, she seemed not so much affected by this event as her parents had feared, for she was calm, although afflicted. Her only solace and amusement now seemed to be the rose with which she had been presented by the Elfin child. To this object she appeared to have transferred all her affections. Day and night would she contemplate it, and whisper to it soft airs, such as had been taught her by the little giver of the flower; but, as the season approached when the charm breathed on that little flower by the Elfin-child, was to lose its influence, and the leaves of the rose were to become again subject to decay, so did Elfrida also gradually decline, and at length faded away with her flower.

“CANNOT you tell us a tale,” said Charles to the old man. “The imagination is such a delightful property ! But then I have a great dislike to its undertaking any fresh embodiment of what has really happened. All the airy phantoms of its own creation, as things of a peculiar race, are ever and especially welcome ; but when combined with truth, it rarely produces any thing else but monsters ; and on such occasions usually appears to my judgment, at variance both with reason and common sense. The imagination ought to be linked to no one subject, nor must there be any attempt to force any particular subject upon us. To be completely successful, it ought to play upon us just as a piece of music does ; to set the chords of feeling in motion, but in such a way, that we wholly forget these sensations are occasioned by any external object.”

“Pray cease,” rejoined the old man, “to give a further detail of what you expect from a work of imagination. One of the chief

pleasures arising from such productions, is, that we enjoy without making any exactions from them; for the imagination itself is incapable of instituting or enforcing a demand; it can only receive that which is freely offered it. It forms no plans, it fixes on no previous course, but is borne along and conducted by its own wayward pinions; and while it soars through its devious flight, traces out the most extraordinary path, ever changing, and ever renewing its direction. Only let me recall to my mind, during my mid-day walk, some of that imagery which, in my younger days, so frequently amused me, and I promise you in the evening a tale, whose events shall remind you, of every thing and of—nothing.”

THE TALE.

THE stream had overflowed its banks, and, weary with the toils of the day, the aged

ferryman lay asleep in his cottage beside it. He was roused in the middle of the night, by a sound of voices calling aloud—he listened—and found that travellers were desirous of crossing the stream. On opening the door of his cottage, he perceived two large meteors flickering above his boat, who assured him their haste was urgent, and that they already wished themselves on the opposite shore. The old man pushed off without further delay, and with his wonted skill pulled immediately across the stream. The strangers, meanwhile, whispered to each other in an unknown flowing dialect, intermingling occasional burst of violent laughter, and jumping backwards and forwards from the margin to the seat, and from the seat to the bottom of the boat.

“The boat rolls!” exclaimed the old man; “and if you continue thus unruly, it will upset. Be seated lights!” This advice was only answered by a further burst of laughter, and the travellers became more disorderly than before. The ferryman bore patiently with

their rudeness, and shortly reached the opposite shore.

“Take this for your trouble,” said the travellers, as they shook themselves; and several pieces of gold fell to the bottom of the boat.

“For Heaven’s sake! what are you doing?” exclaimed the old man; “you fill me with the greatest distress. Do you not know, that, if a single piece had fallen into the water, such is the stream’s abhorrence of gold, that it would have risen in tremendous billows, would have engulfed both me and my boat, and who knows what might have befallen you. Take back your gold I entreat you.”

“We cannot resume what we have once cast from us,” rejoined the others.

“Then I must be at the trouble,” said the old man, stooping to collect the gold in his cap, “of gathering it together, and transporting it ashore, that it may be buried in the earth.”

The meteors sprang from the boat, and

the old man cried after them : Where is my fare ?

“ Let him who refuses gold, labour without reward,” exclaimed the meteors.

“ But my pay has always been the fruits of the earth.”

“ The fruits of the earth ! we despise them, nor ever have fed on them.”

“ Be that as it may,” rejoined the ferryman, “ I cannot part with you, till you engage to deliver me, three cabbages, three artichokes, and three large onions.”

The meteors were about to make their escape with a sportive reply, but they found themselves fixed to the spot by some incomprehensible means. The sensations produced by it were the most disagreeable they had ever experienced. They therefore promised to comply speedily with the old man’s demand, who dismissed them, and pushed off his boat. He had already proceeded a considerable distance, when the meteors shouted after him. “ Ferryman ! Holla ! Ferryman !

we have forgotten the most important part of our business." But the old man was out of hearing : he had suffered his boat to glide with the stream, resolving to bury the fatal gold in a mountainous part of the country, and on an elevation to which the waters never ascended. Perceiving an enormous chasm lying between two aspiring rocks, he projected the treasure into it, and then recrossed the stream to his cottage.

Within this chasm lay the beautiful green serpent, whom the ringing of the falling money roused from her sleep. Her sight was no sooner struck by the glittering gold, than she instantly hastened to devour it, and carefully sought out every piece which had fallen amid the bushes, or crevices of the rock.

She had scarcely swallowed it, when she experienced the most pleasurable sensations, as the gold percolated through her system ; its cheering influence gradually extended throughout her whole person, and, to her great delight and joy, she shortly perceived that her body

was become both transparent and effulgent. She had long been informed that such an appearance was possible, but, dubious of the durability which might attend this novel change in her nature, curiosity and a desire of future security, impelled her to move from her rock, that she might ascertain the hand which had scattered the treasure. She found no one. Her joy and astonishment, however, knew no bounds, as she wound amid the herbs and shrubs, and beheld the radiant light her presence diffused. Every leaf appeared to be of emerald; every flower to be decorated with a halo of glory. Her search through the solitary wilderness bordering on her abode, was wholly fruitless; but on reaching the plain her hopes revived, as she perceived at a distance, a glare of light somewhat resembling her own. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "do I at length behold my kindred"—and so saying she darted rapidly forward, disregarding of the difficulties which impeded her, as she crept through the swamps and reeds. Hitherto

her chief delight had been to reside among the mountain meadows ; to feed upon the aromatic herbs they produced, and to soothe her thirst in the limpid waters of their bubbling springs, or in the pure and reviving dews of heaven. Yet, for the sake of the cherished gold, and the hope inspired by the wonderful light she now struggled through every obstacle.

Excessively fatigued, she at length reached a marshy pasture, where our two meteors pursued their sport. Darting rapidly forwards, she saluted the strangers in a tone of studied courtesy, and expressed her joy on meeting two such agreeable gentlemen of her own kindred. The meteors approached her, danced around and above her, and continued to laugh in their wonted manner.

“ Auntie,” said they : “ Though you may claim descent from the horizontal line, that is little to the purpose ; and though you are related to us on the score of your light, do but look here for a moment—(here the two flames

compressing their breadth, stretched themselves out to their greatest possible length)—do but look here and see how beautifully this taper extension becomes us gentlemen of the vertical line. Far be it from us, to say any thing offensive to a sensitive mind like yours, but what family can boast with those of the meteor tribe, that, since the world's creation, not one of us has been known to lie or sit down ?”

The serpent felt herself excessively uncomfortable, in the presence of her relations ; for, however high she raised her head, she still found herself compelled to approach the earth, before she could move from the spot on which she stood ; and, much as she had been pleased with herself in the gloomy recesses of the wood, yet in the presence of these her cousins, her radiance appeared gradually to decline : nor was she wholly free from fear, lest it might eventually die away.

In this dilemma, she ventured to ask the gentlemen, if they could inform her whence

the glittering treasure had proceeded, which a short time before had fallen into her retreat—for her own part, she was disposed to believe it a shower of gold which had dropped immediately from heaven. The meteors laughed, gave a tremulous motion to their bodies, and a stream of gold descended to the ground. The serpent darted forward to devour it.

“Auntie,” said these courteous gentleman, “pray, make yourself comfortable—we have more at your service,” and so saying, they repeated their movements with such expedition, that the serpent could scarcely swallow the delicious fare with sufficient rapidity. Her radiant appearance now visibly increased, and she shone with infinite splendour; while the meteors as evidently decreased in size, and became extremely emaciated, though without in any degree losing their lively humour.

“I owe you eternal obligations,” said the serpent, the instant she had ceased her repast

—ask what you will of me—any thing within my power to perform, shall be instantly accomplished.

“ Well then,” said the meteors, “ tell us the abode of the fair Lilie: transport us with all possible speed to her palace and gardens—we are dying with impatience to cast ourselves at her feet.”

“ Alas!” said the serpent, with a deep drawn sigh, that is a service I am unable to render you at present—for unhappily, the fair Lilie resides on the opposite side of the stream.”

“ On the opposite side of the stream, the stream which we have crossed in this tempestuous night, and which now rolls so furiously between us! Could we not by any possibility, recall the ferryman?”

“ That would be a fruitless labour,” rejoined the serpent, “ for if he now stood on this side of the river, he could not receive you; he is only permitted to transport persons here; he may not convey any one back.”

“ Then we have chosen a very pretty abode. —Is there no other way of crossing the water?”

“There is, but not at this moment. I can transport you across—but only at the hour of noon.”

“Why that is an hour, we do not willingly travel at.”

“Then you may cross in the evening on the shadow of the giant.”

“And how may this be done?”

“The giant who lives in the neighbourhood, is totally destitute of corporeal strength—his hands are incapable of lifting a straw, or his shoulders of supporting a bundle of reeds; but his shadow is a tower of might, is equal to any exertion. Hence, he is most powerful at the rising and setting of the sun; and the traveller has only to watch his descent to the river towards the close of day, to place himself upon the neck of the giant’s shadow, and he will be certain of passing the river. If, however, you will post yourselves at noon, at the corner of yonder wood, where the shrubs unite with the bank, I can convey you over, and also present you to the fair Lilie. But as you may be fearful of the mid-day heat, you have

only to wait for the giant in the evening, near yonder rocky bay below, and there can be little doubt but he will consent to your wishes."

The meteors here took their departure, making a courteous salutation to their informant; and the serpent felt happy in being relieved of their society. She was desirous of enjoying her own light unrestrained by the presence of others, and also of gratifying a curiosity which had long tormented her with ceaseless anxiety.

During her perigrinations round the chasm in the rock, it had been her chance to discover in one particular spot, something which had wholly perplexed her to account for. For, though destitute of light as she crept through the abyss, she could yet distinguish objects by the touch; and of these, she usually met with nothing, except the shapeless productions of nature—wandering alternately amid the uneven chrystallizations of the rock, or the bristly projections of virgin silver; and occasionally bringing forth to the light, some brilliant and costly stone. Yet to her great surprise, in one

part of the rock, which was encompassed on all sides, she had felt objects that seemed to betray the plastic hand of man. She found smoothly polished walls, which repelled all her attempts to ascend them; sharp and regular angles, well-proportioned columns, and what filled her with more astonishment than all, figures apparently human, around which she had often wound, and which she had been induced to conceive, were either of brass or highly polished marble. These were the objects she now felt desirous of gazing on; and of confirming by experience, what hitherto had only rested on conjecture. She thought her own light sufficient to illumine this wondrous subterranean abode, and hoped now to become fully acquainted with the nature of these extraordinary objects. She proceeded rapidly forwards, and soon found the crevice through which she had been accustomed to enter the sanctuary.

On arriving at the spot, she gazed around with eager curiosity; and though her rays were incapable of shedding light on every object of

the rotunda, those nearest to her were perfectly distinct. With mingled sensations of astonishment and awe, she looked up towards a brilliant niche, containing the statue of a venerable monarch of pure gold. In stature, it rather exceeded the usual standard of the human form; but in its proportions, it more nearly resembled the representation of a small than a large man. The body, of the most perfect symmetry, was covered with a plain unadorned mantle; and the head encircled by a garland of oak.

The serpent had scarcely regarded this venerable figure, when the king addressed her, saying:

“Whither comest thou?”

“From the cliffs inhabited by gold.”

“What is more splendid than gold?” inquired the king.

“Light!” rejoined the serpent.

“What is more refreshing than light?” continued the former.

“Parlance!” answered the latter.

During this discourse, the serpent had glanced aside, and perceived another magnifi-

cent figure in the adjoining niche. In this sate a silver king, of a tall and rather languishing form; his body was covered with a richly ornamented robe; his crown, belt, and sceptre were decorated with jewels; his countenance wore the calm serenity of pride, and he seemed to be on the point of speaking, when a vein in the marble wall, which coursed dimly down it, became suddenly transparent, and shed an agreeable light throughout the temple. By the assistance of this light, the serpent discovered a third king, whose mighty form of brass, sate leaning on his club—his temples were crowned with a wreath of laurel, and he seemed more like a rock than a man. She was about to look upon the fourth, which stood at a considerable distance from her, when the wall opened, and the luminous vein making a rapid movement, somewhat like the coruscations of lightning, disappeared.

The serpent's attention was now fixed on a man of middling stature, who came out of the wall. He was cloathed in peasant's attire, and in his hand he bore a small lamp, whose gentle

flame excited in all who beheld it, a strong desire of watching its movements, and which in the most extraordinary manner, and without casting a single shadow, illumined the cupola of the temple.

“Why dost thou come now, that we have light?” demanded the golden king?

“You know, that I cannot enlighten the gloom.”

“Does my dominion close?” asked the silver king.

“Late or never,” replied the old man.

With a deep and powerful voice, the brazen king demanded: “When shall I rise?”

“Soon,” replied the old man.

“With whom shall I unite?”

“With thy elder brethren.”

“What will become of the younger?” continued the king.

“He will sit down,” said the old man.

“I am not weary,” exclaimed the fourth king, in a rough faltering tone.

While they were engaged in conversation, the serpent had crept quietly round the temple,

had viewed all that was to be seen, and was now contemplating the fourth king more nearly.

He stood resting on a column, and his impressive form was rather unwieldy than beautiful. It was, however, impossible to distinguish the metal of which he was composed. On a close inspection, it seemed a mixture of the several metals of which his brothers were made; yet there were certain marks which indicated, that the materials had not properly amalgamated; for veins of gold and silver ran irregularly through a mass of brass, and gave the figure a disagreeable appearance.

In the mean time, the golden king addressed the man with the lamp :

“ How many secrets dost thou know ? ”

“ Three,” replied the old man.

“ Which is the most important ? ” inquired the silver king.

“ That which is manifest,” rejoined the old man ?

“ Wilt thou reveal it to us ? ” asked the brazen king.

“When I know the fourth,” said the old man.

“What care I for it,” muttered the compound king to himself.

“*I* know the fourth,” said the serpent, as she approached the old man, and then whispered something in his ear.

“The time is at hand:” cried the old man with a powerful voice.

The temple re-echoed with the sound, the metallic figures rang responsively, the old man instantly retired towards the west, the serpent towards the east, and each hurried forward through the cliffs of the rock.

All the passages, through which the old man passed, became filled with gold; for his lamp possessed the wonderful property of transforming stones into gold, timber into silver, deceased animals into jewels, and of annihilating every species of metal. To perform these operations, it was however, necessary, that it should shine alone. In the presence of another light, it only produced a clear agreeable flame; but one at whose appearance, every thing possessed

of life, felt an increase of vigour and animation.

The old man entered his cottage upon the mountain side, and found his wife in the greatest distress. She sat weeping aloud over the fire, and was unable to tranquilize herself.

“Luckless being ! that I am,” she exclaimed, “why did I suffer you to leave me this day.”

“What is the matter then ?” enquired her husband, with the greatest composure.

“You had scarcely left me,” rejoined his wife with a sob, “when two loquacious travellers arrived at our door—I was indiscreet enough to admit them, for they seemed a pair of honest well-behaved people—they were clothed in a gentle flame, and might have passed for meteors : hardly were they within the house, when they began to wheedle me in the most undisguised manner, and became so pressing, that I am quite ashamed to think of it.”

“Well,” observed the old man with a smile, “the gentlemen were disposed to be merry, I suppose ; for at your age, I take it, they could

have offered nothing more than common-place civilities.”

“Age, quotha ! I say age indeed !” exclaimed his wife ; “ must I always be dinned with my age ? Why what is my age then ? Common civilities too ! But I know what I know. Do but make use of your eyes ; look at the walls ; look at these ancient stones, which I have not seen for a century past—they licked off the gold, with an alacrity surpassing all comprehension, and kept assuring me all the time, that it had an infinite better flavour than every day gold. As soon as they had cleared the walls, they seemed to be in excellent spirits ; and it cannot be denied, but that they soon grew taller, broader, and far more brilliant. They now renewed their wayward sports, carressed me again and again ; called me their queen, shook themselves violently, and a quantity of gold dropt to the earth—you see how it still glitters beneath the bench—but ah ! in this lies my misfortune—our poor Mops swallowed but a few of them ; and see where he lies dead in the chimney corner. Poor, poor creature ! I am

quite past all consolation. I did not observe it, till they were gone, or I would not have engaged to pay their debt to the ferryman."

"How much do they owe?" asked the old man.

"Three cabbages, three artichokes, and three large onions," replied his wife.

"You may as well oblige them so far," said her husband; "when occasion offers, they will possibly do us a service in return."

"I know not how far they may serve us hereafter, but I have both promised and sworn to pay the debt."

In the meantime the fire had become nearly extinct, when the old man carefully covered the few remaining embers with ashes, collected the gold which lay glittering under the bench, and relighted his lamp alone. The walls instantly became clothed again with their former metallic covering, emitting the most dazzling effulgence and Mops, transformed to the most beautiful onyx the imagination can conceive. The alternate succession of black and light brown tints upon his exterior, gave him

the appearance of a most astonishing piece of sculpture.

“Fetch hither your basket,” said the old man to his wife, “and place the onyx within it. Around it, bestow your three cabbages, your three artichokes, and your three onions, and carry them to the river side. At noon let the serpent convey you over. Visit the fair Lilie, present her with the onyx; she will reanimate it with her touch—that fatal touch which destroys every thing possessed of life—and tell her she will find in the dog a faithful companion. Desire her to wail no more; her deliverance draws near; she may regard the greatest mischance, as the greatest good fortune, for—the time is at hand.”

The old woman packed up her basket, and at the dawn of day proceeded on her journey. The rising sun shone brightly above the river, making its waters one continued sheet of light; the old woman paced forward with a weary step, for the basket pressed heavily on her head, though it was not the onyx that thus

burthened her. Whenever the basket carried any lifeless thing, its weight was unfelt; it then floated in the air, and hovered above the old woman's head. But a vegetable freshly gathered, or any animal, however small, possessed of life, became exceedingly oppressive. In a fretful mood, she continued her way, for a considerable time, when she suddenly halted overpowered by fear. To her greatest dismay and alarm, she perceived herself in the act of treading on the giant's shadow, which stretched across the plain to the spot where she stood. The enormous figure of the giant himself, soon met her sight. He had just emerged from the river where he had been bathing; and the old woman felt it would be impossible to avoid him. As soon as the giant perceived her, he saluted her in a tone of raillery, and the hands of his shadow made a grasp at her basket. With equal skill and dispatch they pulled forth a cabbage, an artichoke, and an onion, bore them to the giant's mouth; who, on this, proceeded up the river and left the old woman to pursue her

journey, debating in her mind whether it would not be better to return, and supply the deficiency thus occasioned from her garden; she still continued to advance, till at length she reached the banks of the river without deciding her doubts. She sate for a considerable time awaiting the ferryman's arrival, who at last was descried pulling across, with a passenger of an extraordinary appearance. A young man of noble mien and lofty stature alighted from the boat, whom the old woman could not sufficiently gaze on.

“What have you brought?” said the ferryman.

“The vegetables due from the meteors,” replied the old woman, pointing to her basket.

On finding only two of a sort, the ferryman seemed chagrined, and told her he could not receive them.

The old woman entreated him not to refuse them; dwelt upon the toil of returning home again, and expatiated upon the hardships of retracing her steps with such an oppressive burthen.

The ferryman remained firm in his resolution, declaring the affair was not at his own disposal. "I am compelled," said he, "to leave untouched for nine successive hours, whatever is due to me, nor can I accept of any thing for my own use until I have given a third to the stream." After a great deal of altercation, he at length observed: "There is yet one remedy left. If you will pledge your faith to the stream, and acknowledge the debt to him, I will take the six pieces due to me—though I think it right to tell you the affair is not wholly free from danger."

"But if I keep my word, there can be no danger, I suppose."

"None in the least, only plunge your hand into the river, and promise to discharge the debt within four and twenty hours."

The old woman did as she was commanded, but what was her alarm and grief, on withdrawing her hand, and perceiving it to be black as ebony. She stormed and raved against the ferryman, declared her hands had always been the most beautiful part of her person ;

and that, notwithstanding her daily and arduous labours, she still had managed to keep them fair and delicate. Filled with chagrin and rage, she looked at her hand again and exclaimed in a tone of deep despair: "Why this is worse and worse: I see it has even grown less: it is much, much smaller than the other."

"It only seems so now," said the ferryman; "if you break your engagement it will become so in reality; your hand will then gradually diminish, and at last wholly disappear: though you will not lose the use of it, you will be able to do every thing with it as usual—only no one will have the power of seeing it."

"I would rather I could not use it all, than that nobody looked at it," said the old woman; however, it is a matter of little importance; I shall keep my word, and soon be rid of my grief, and this odious black skin. On this she resumed her basket, which rising spontaneously in the air, floated above her head; and she directed her steps towards the youthful stranger, who rapt in thought paced slowly along the shore. His noble form and singular

costume had made a strong impression on the old woman. He wore a breast-plate of most exquisite polish, and of such an extraordinary structure, that every motion of his body, every play of the muscles was distinctly seen through it. A purple mantle was thrown carelessly over his shoulders ; and his fine auburn hair flowed loosely about his uncovered head. His countenance expressive of every amiable perfection, and his feet of the most delicate proportion, were both exposed to the rays of the scorching sun. Barefooted as he was, he strode listlessly over the burning sand, and some deep and inward sorrow appeared to make him insensible to every object around him.

The talkative old woman, endeavoured to engage him in conversation, but he only replied to her with a few unmeaning monosyllables ; till, at length, in spite of the strong attraction, excited by his large dark eyes, she became weary of thus addressing him, and took her leave by saying : Ah ! Sir, you pace it too heavily for me. I have no time to

ose in passing the river, on the back of the green serpent; and bringing the fair Lilie this exquisite present from my husband." With this she hastened forwards, while the young man, recovering from his reverie, hurried after her with equal speed.

"Are you going to see the fair Lilie?" he said to her. "Why then our road lies the same way. But what present is this you are carrying her?"

"Sir," replied the old woman, in a tone expressive of her dissatisfaction at his previous conduct, "after meeting all my enquiries with a few dry and costive responses, methinks, there is little reason in the lively zeal with which you now strive to fathom my secrets. If, however, you feel disposed for a fair exchange, and will tell me your adventures, I shall have no objection to relate how matters stand with regard to me and my present." The agreement was soon made, the old woman told her whole history, the affair of the dog, and even permitted the stranger to see this extraordinary present.

The young man immediately took the onyx

from the basket, and placed it in his arms. "Happy ! happy creature ! he exclaimed ; it will be thine to feel the gentle pressure of her hand, to be restored to life and health by her touch, while all who live are compelled to flee her, lest they meet a mournful end by her embrace. Yet why do I call it mournful ? is it not far more painful and distressing to be tortured by her presence, than to die by her hand ? Look at me," said he to the old woman, " see what a miserable condition I am reduced to ! This breast-plate which I have borne with honour in war, this mantle which I have endeavoured to deserve by the wisdom of my government, is all that fate has left me ; the former a needless burthen, the latter a superfluous ornament. Crown, sceptre, and sword are gone ; I am equally destitute and necessitous with the poorest child of humanity, for such are the fatal effects of her fair blue eyes, that they deprive every living being of his energies, and those who are not destroyed by her touch, only live to feel themselves transformed into moving shadows."

In this manner he continued his complaints, without in any way gratifying the old woman's curiosity ; who felt far more desirous of knowing his worldly fortunes, than the distressed state of his feelings. She could neither learn from him the name of his father, or his kingdom. He only continued to caress the petrified form of Mops, whom the rays of the sun, and the warmth of the young man's breast, had contributed to give the natural heat of life. He made many enquiries about the old man with the lamp, and the effect of its sacred light ; and appeared to promise himself considerable relief from its assistance hereafter.

Amid this discourse, the majestic arch of the bridge was seen at a distance, extending from one bank of the river to the other, and glittering in the meridian sun. The young man and his companion were both filled with astonishment, for they had never beheld it so resplendent before.

“What !” exclaimed the prince, “was it not sufficiently beautiful in former times when it stood built of jasper and prase ? How shall

we venture to profane it with our footsteps, now that it is composed of all the mingled beauties of the emerald, the chrysolite and chrysoprase?"

Neither was acquainted with the change in the serpent's nature ; for, in fact, it was the serpent who, every day at noon, thus arched herself across the stream, and stood in the form of a magnificent bridge. The travellers trode it with awe, and passed over in silence.

They had scarcely reached the opposite shore, when the bridge began to tremble ; the surface of the water became agitated, and the green serpent, in her own shape, glided after the travellers on shore. The latter had scarcely thanked her, for the permission thus allowed them, of passing the river, when they discovered that there must be more persons in company, although invisible. They heard a sort of sibilant noise, to which the serpent also replied with a hiss. They listened, and at length heard : " First of all, we will take a look round Lillie's park, quite incognito as it were, we will then request of you, on the ap-

proach of night, and, as soon as we are any way fit to be seen, to do the honours of presenting us to this paragon of beauty. You will find us near the borders of the great lake.

“Agreed,” replied the serpent; and a hissing noise lost itself in air.

Our travellers now consulted on the order in which they should present themselves: for, however numerous the attendants of the fair damsel might be, only one at a time could either approach or retire from her, without exposing themselves to severe pain.

The old woman having her dog in the basket, first approached the gardens, and sought out her patroness, whom there was little difficulty in finding, as she chanced at that time, to be engaged with her harp. The expressive tones as they vibrated on the air were first seen to move in circles on the surface of the tranquil lake, and then like the fauning of a gentle breeze, to give an undulating motion to every leaf and flower around. The fair musician was seated in the midst of a verdant grass-plot, beneath the shade of a lofty groupe of

trees, and, at first sight, enchanted anew the eyes, the ears, and the heart of the old woman, who approached her with delight, vowing, in her own mind, that the lonely beauty had become more captivating during her absence. The good old dame shouted forth her salutations and praises from a distance, exclaiming : “ What a happiness to behold you ! What a heaven does your presence expand around you ! How delightfully does the harp recline upon your bosom ! How charmingly do your arms enclose it, and how sweetly does it resound beneath the touch of your delicate fingers. Thrice happy, happy youth ! he who shall succeed to its place.”

With these words she had drawn nearer, and the fair Lilie, raising her eyes and sinking her arms beside her replied :

“ Pain me not, I pray you, by this untimely praise, you only make me more sensible to my miseries. See where my poor canary bird lies dead at my feet : he who was used so delightfully to accompany my song ; who was wont to sit upon my harp and had been care-

fully instructed not to touch me. As I arose this morning, refreshed by sleep, while pouring forth my matin hymn, in which I was joined by my little songster, and whose melodious notes rang out with livelier joy than ever, a rapacious hawk swooped suddenly before my head; my poor bird, terrified for his safety, flew to my bosom, and in an instant I felt the last throb of his parting existence. It is true, the destroyer, penetrated by my looks flutters faintly beside yonder water, but how can his punishment assuage my grief; my favorite is dead, and his grave will only serve to encrease the mournful shrubs of my garden.

“Compose yourself, lovely Lilie,” said the old woman, as she dried a tear which the narrative of the distressed damsel had drawn from her eyes; “take courage, I pray you! My husband bids me charge you to moderate your grief; to regard the greatest mischance, as the messenger of the greatest joy; for the time is at hand.”

“Aye, aye!” continued the old dame, “it is indeed, a mad world this of ours. Do but

look at my hand! How black it is grown. Why, really it is become very, very much smaller, I must hasten before it entirely disappear. Oh! why must I do the meteors this kindness? Why must I meet the giant? and why must I plunge my hand into the stream? Can you supply me with an onion, an artichoke, and a cabbage? I could then take them to the river, my hand would become as white as ever, and I might then almost hold it beside yours.

“Cabbages and onions you will find any where, but artichokes you may seek for in vain. The plants in my garden bear neither blossom nor fruit, but every twig that I break, and plant upon the grave of a favourite, instantly takes root and shoots up on high. These clusters of lofty trees, these shrubs and these groves—alas! I have seen them grow up with my own eyes. The spreading branches of these pines, these taper obelisks of cypress, and these colossal forms of oak and beech were all slender twigs planted by my own hand, as monuments of my grief, in a soil hitherto unfruitful.”

The old woman paid little attention to these

observations, but continued to gaze upon her hand, which, in the presence of the fair Lilie, assumed a blacker hue, and from time to time, appeared smaller and smaller. She was about to take up her basket and hasten away, when she observed, that she had forgotten the most important part of her errand. She immediately drew forth the onyx, and placed it on the grass at a little distance from Lilie.

“My husband,” said she, “sends you this memorial; you know that, by touching the stone, you may re-animate it. The dear faithful creature will be a source of infinite joy to you, and my grief on losing him is only soothed by the recollection, that he is in your possession.”

Lilie gazed on the poor creature with pleasure, and apparently with astonishment.

“A variety of signs combine,” she said, “to inspire me with hope, but alas! it is one of the commonest caprices of our nature, that when misfortune besets us, we imagine better times to be at hand.

Oh! what avail these omens of success,
My warbler's death, the dame's dark ebon hand;
The dog's bright form, or future fond caress,
Transformed and sent me by the lamp's command.

Still must I live in dreary solitude,
Forego life's pleasures for a joyless dream;
For ah! no temple stands beside the flood,
No bridge is seen to arch above the stream.

The good old woman listened impatiently to this song, which the fair Lilie accompanied with her harp, and whose melody would have filled any one else with rapture. She was about to take leave, when her departure was again impeded by the arrival of the serpent. The latter had heard the concluding words of the song, and advanced to inspire the fair songstress with confidence.

"The prophecy of the bridge is fulfilled," she exclaimed; "only ask this good old dame how resplendently it shines above the stream. That which formerly was composed of mere beamless jasper, which was only of prase, whose angles alone emitted a few faint gleams

of light is now become a translucid jewel. No beryll is so clear, no emerald possesses half its tints."

"My congratulations attend you thereon," said the fair Lilie, "but excuse me, if I still doubt the fulfilment of the prophecy. As yet, foot-passengers alone can pass over the lofty arch of your bridge, and it has been promised us, that horses and carriages, and travellers of every description, shall be seen upon the bridge at once. Was it not also foretold us, that the stately columns which support it, should arise out of the stream itself?"

The old woman, who had continued to gaze upon her hand, here interrupted the discourse, took her leave.

"Wait, but a moment," said Lilie, "and take my poor canary bird with you. Beg the lamp to transform it into a beautiful topaz, I will recall it to life by my touch, and that and your sweet Mops shall be my dearest amusement. But haste, I pray you, with your utmost speed, for, with the setting-sun, the poor creature will be seized an with irresistible corruption

and the beautiful symmetry of its form will be destroyed for ever."

The old woman placed the corpse of the bird in her basket between some downy foliage, and hurried away.

"Be that as it may," said the serpent, renewing the conversation which had been interrupted, "the temple is built."

"But it does not stand beside the river" rejoined Lilie.

"For the present, it reposes in the depths of the earth," said the serpent; I have both seen and conversed with the kings."

"But when will they stand up?" enquired Lilie.

The serpent replied, "I have heard the awful words resound in the temple : the time is at hand."

A look of joy overspread the countenance of the fair mourner, and she exclaimed :

"Have I twice in one day, heard these happy words—oh ! when will that day arrive, on which I shall hear them thrice !"

She now rose from her seat, and instantly a

beautiful damsel issued from the thicket, and received the harp. Another followed, who took up the ivory chair upon which Lilie had been seated, folded it up and placed the silver cushion under her arm. A third now appeared, bearing a large parasol embroidered with pearls, and waiting to see if Lilie would require her attendance for a walk. The beauty of these damsels far exceeded every power of description, yet they only served to heighten the charms of Lilie, with whom they could not endure a moment's comparison.

In the mean time, Lilie stood contemplating the dog with evident satisfaction. She bent herself forwards, touched him with her hand, and in an instant he sprang up. He looked about him with an expression of lively joy, ran backwards and forwards, and at length hastened to offer his friendly salutations to his benefactress. Lilie took him in her arms, and pressed him to her bosom.

“Cold as thou art,” she exclaimed, “and though only endowed with half an existence, still thou art welcome to me. I will tenderly

love thee, cheerfully sport with thee, kindly caress thee and press thee thus close to my heart."

On this, she freed him from her embrace, chased him away, then recalled him, alternately playing with and caressing him, and dancing around on the grass with so much joy and innocence, that every one viewed her transport with delight, and participated in her pleasure, from the same impulse that shortly before they had been moved to compassionate her grief. The entrance of the young man put a stop to these lively demonstrations of joy. He approached much the same in appearance as we have already described him, except that he seemed exhausted by the heat of the sun, and in the presence of his mistress, he grew paler every instant. His hand supported a hawk, who sate perched with the docile temper of a dove, and hanging his drooping wings.

"I take it extremely unkind of you," said Lilie to him, "that you bring into my presence that odious bird, the monster who, this morning, slew my little warbler."

“Do not chide my unhappy bird,” rejoined the youth; “rather repine over yourself and your luckless destiny, and allow me to associate with the companion of my misery.

During this discourse Mops ceased not to importune his fair mistress, and she replied to her transparent favourite with the most friendly attentions. She clapped her hands to scare him away from her, and then ran round him to provoke his pursuit. She endeavoured to seize him as he fled from her, and chased him away when he attempted to jump on her.

The young man beheld them with increasing vexation; and at length, as he perceived her take the hateful object in her arms—and which to him appeared, a mere monster of deformity—as she pressed it to her bosom, and kissed its swarthy snout with her divine lips, his patience wholly forsook him, and, filled with despair, he exclaimed:

“Must I then—I who live, and perchance, always may live in a divided presence with thee; I who have lost all, even myself through thee?—Must I see with my own eyes, that

such an unnatural abortion can excite thee to joy, can bind thy affections, and enjoy thy caresses? Shall I still continue to wander to and fro, and measure the mournful round from one bank of the river to its opposite shore? No! one spark of heroic courage still resides within my breast, let it now burst forth into a flame. If stones can repose on thy bosom, then let me be one; if thy touch destroys every thing it enfolds, let me too die by thy hands."

With these words, he darted rapidly forwards; the hawk flew from his hands, he rushed to the spot where Lilie was standing, who extended her arms to avert his approach, and only touched him the sooner. All sense of consciousness instantly left him, and filled with horror, Lilie felt the fair burthen on her bosom. She stepped back with a shriek of dismay, and the beauteous youth sank expiring to the earth.

The fatal deed was accomplished! Lilie stood immoveable, and gazed on the lifeless corpse with a fixed and constant stare. Her heart seemed to cease its vibrations, and her eyes

stood expanded without a tear. It was in vain that Mops attempted to gain her friendly notice, the whole world had died with her lover.

The serpent, on the other hand, only became more assiduous. She appeared to be planning relief, and her extraordinary movements tended to check, at least for a time, the immediate consequences of this terrible catastrophe.

She traced, with her flexible body, an extensive circle round the corpse, seized the end of her tail in her teeth, and remained without motion.

In a short time one of Lilie's attendants made her appearance, carrying the ivory chair, and fondly pressed her mistress to sit down; a second presently entered bearing a flame coloured veil, with which she rather decorated than covered the head of the fair mourner; the third now produced her harp, and Lilie had scarcely arranged it and drawn a few notes from the strings, before the first returned with a circular mirror, placed herself immediately opposite her mistress, and reflected from the glass the most enchanting image to be found in nature. Her

grief had enhanced the fair recluse's beauty, the veil had heightened her charms, the harp seemed to call forth a full display of all her graces; and, though all would have been happy to see a change in her mournful lot, they still would have desired to retain the image then before them. With her eyes immoveably fixed on the mirror she now drew forth the most mleting strains from her harp. Her sufferings then appeared to increase and the strings emitted a mournful response to her woes. At times she endeavoured to give utterance to her distress by a song, but her voice refused its office: her grief at length dissolved into tears, she sank gently backwards, two of her attendants caught her in their arms, the harp sank from her hold, and the third attendant received it and bore it away.

“Who will procure us the man with the lamp ere the sun descends to the ocean?” whispered the serpent in a gentle but audible voice; the damsels looked at each other and Lilie's tears coursed down the faster. At this instant the old woman returned with her basket and pant-

ing for breath : she exclaimed : “ I am lost and maimed for ever ; see how my hand has almost wholly disappeared. Both the ferryman and the giant refuse to bear me across because I am a debtor to the stream. In vain I offered a hundred artichokes and a hundred onions ; they only demanded the three pieces and not an artichoke is to be found in the whole country.

“ Forget your own necessities,” said the serpent, and see what assistance you can lend here. Perhaps you too may derive help from the same source. Use all your speed in discovering the meteors. It is yet too light to see them but, perhaps, you may hear them flicker or talk. If they make haste the giant may still bear them over. They can then find out the man with the lamp and send him hither.”

The old woman hurried away and Lilie shared the serpent’s impatience for her return. The rays of the sitting sun now only gilded the tops of the highest trees and their long and dusky shadows lay stretching across the lake and the meadows. The serpent trembled from anxious alarm and Lilie sate dissolved in tears.

In this dilemma the serpent looked eagerly around in every direction; she was fearful the sun would set, that corruption would penetrate the magic circle and irresistibly seize upon the beautiful youth. At length she perceived the hawk soaring aloft, his plumage tinged with a damask glow from the last rays of the sun. Her whole frame was agitated by joy at this fortunate token; nor was she deceived, for shortly after the man with the lamp was seen striding across the lake as if borne upon skates.

The serpent made no change in her position but Lilie arose and cried out to him: "What friendly spirit has sent you hither at this critical juncture when, we have been so desirous of your presence, and have so much needed you?" "The spirit of my lamp has driven me," replied the old man, and the hawk has been my guide. Whenever I am wanted, the flame emits a crackling noise, and I have only to look into the air for a token. A bird or a meteor then shews me the direction in which I must bend my way. Be comforted, fairest of virgins! I know not whether I can

materially assist you; a single arm is of little avail; it is he who combines with many at a fit occasion who treads the path of success. Let us, however, ward off the present evil and hope for the future. Keep your circle compact, he continued, turning to the serpent as he sate down on a mound beside her, and held his lamp before the dead body. Let the canary bird also be brought here and placed within the circle." One of the damsels took the bird from the basket which the old woman had left behind her, and obeyed the old man's instructions.

By this time the sun had set, and, as the gloom of evening increased, not only the serpent and the lamp shone as usual, but the veil of Lilie emitted a gentle light which, like the tints of morning dawn, gave a hue of inexpressible sweetness to her pallid cheeks and snow-white robe. The whole party remained gazing on the lamp in silence and their griefs and regrets seemed modified by the confidence of hope.

In a short time the old woman made her appearance walking between the two meteors

whose bounty, since the morning, must have been considerable, as they were become extremely emaciated, although their courtesy towards Lilie and her attendants knew no bounds. They uttered the most common-place expressions in a tone of solemn dignity and with studied emphasis; and strongly evinced their sensibility to the charms, which the luminous veil had shed upon Lilie and her damsels. The females modestly cast their eyes to the earth, and the praises bestowed upon their beauty gave it additional power. Every one seemed contented and tranquil, except the old woman. Notwithstanding her husband's assurances, that her hand would suffer no further diminution, so long as it was shone upon by the lamp, she more than once maintained that, if it continued to decrease in the same ratio as it then did, that this delicate and useful limb would wholly disappear before midnight.

The man with the lamp had listened attentively to the conversation of the meteors, and was pleased to observe that Lilie felt amused and enlivened by their discourse. Amid this midnight arrived. The old man looked up to

the starry canopy above him, and immediately observed: "We are collected at a fortunate conjuncture; let each assume his station, let each perform his duty, and a general happiness will absorb individual grief, in the same manner that general misfortune destroys individual joy."

A general bustle now arose among the party; all spoke for themselves, and expressed aloud the part they were about to act. The three attending damsels alone remained quiet, for the one had fallen asleep beside the harp, the other lay reclining her head upon the mirror and the third sate kneeling behind the chair.

"Take up the mirror," said the old man to the hawk; "with the first ray of the rising-sun illumine the sleepers and awaken them with the light reflected from on high."

The serpent now began to move; she dissolved the spell-bound circle and proceeded slowly towards the river. The two meteors followed her in solemn silence, and might now have been taken for the most serious of flames. The old woman and her husband laid hold of the basket, whose gentle light had hitherto

been scarcely observed; they pulled it at each extreme, and it became larger and more luminous. Within it they placed the body of the young man, and laid the canary bird on his breast. The basket then rose into the air and floated above the old woman's head, who proceeded to join the meteors. Lilie took up Mops in her arms, and walked after the old woman; the man with the lamp closed the train, and the variegated light, cast from the procession illumined the country round in a most extraordinary manner.

A general expression of astonishment burst from them all on reaching the river and beholding the splendid arch across it, which the benevolent serpent had raised for them. If the translucent materials of which it seemed to be composed, had excited their admiration by day, how much greater was their surprize on viewing its still more wondrous splendour by night. The top of the brilliant circle seemed to hang upon the gloomy concave of heaven, while below the converging rays inclined towards the centre and exhibited the firm yet moving stability of the

structure. The wanderers passed slowly over it, and the ferry-man, who looked forth from his cottage in the distance, was filled with astonishment at the beaming arch, and the extraordinary lights passing over it.

They were scarcely arrived at the opposite shore, when the bridge began to waver as usual, and to approach the water with an undulating motion. The serpent soon reached the shore; the basket sank to the ground; the serpent renewed her former circle around it and the old man stooped down and asked: "On what hast thou resolved?"

"To make a voluntary immolation of my person ere I am compelled to become a victim," replied the serpent; "only promise me that not a single stone shall remain upon the shore." The old man gave the pledge required, and turning to Lilie he said: "Touch the serpent with thy left hand, and thy lover with thy right." Lilie kneeled down and touched them both. In an instant the latter appeared passing into life; he moved in the basket, and presently sate upright; Lilie was about to embrace him, but the old man motioned her

away, and assisted the young man in rising and passing out of the circle.

The young man stood for some time motionless; the canary bird fluttered on his shoulder; there was life in each, though the consciousness of it had returned to neither; the former gazed with expanded eyes though he saw nothing before him—at least he appeared to look on all objects with equal indifference—and the astonishment of the rest, at this event, was scarcely modified, when they perceived the singular change which had taken place in the serpent's person. Her beautiful taper body lay divided into myriads of precious stones; for the old woman, in catching at her basket, had inadvertently struck the serpent's body of whom no further trace was seen, while the grass was pressed by a garland of brilliant jewels.

The old man made instant preparation for placing the dismembered wreath in the basket, and compelled his wife to join in the labour. They then bore it to an elevated spot on the banks of the river; and the former cast its contents into the stream, not without opposition from

Lilie and his wife, who were desirous of retaining some of them. The stones swam with the current, like so many brilliant and twinkling stars, and it was impossible to distinguish whether they became lost in the distance, or sank to the depths of the stream.

“Gentlemen,” said the old man with an air of reverence to the meteors, “I will now shew you the way. You will confer upon us an infinite favour, if you will open the gates of the sanctuary into which we must, this time enter, and which no one can effect except yourselves.”

The meteors bowed with an air of courtesy and took up their station in the rear of the procession. The old man with the lamp first entered the rocks ; the young man moved after him from a kind of mechanical impulse. Lilie followed her lover at a small distance in silence ; the old woman felt no desire to remain deserted, and stretched forth her hand that the lamp might shine upon it. The meteors closed the procession, the points of their flames inclined inwards as if they were engaged in conversation.

They had not proceeded far, when they

found themselves standing before a large brazen gate-way, whose folding portals were secured by a golden lock. The old man turned round to summon the meteors, who were by no means backward in obeying the call; but eagerly applied the points of their flames, to the duty, and soon devoured both lock and bolt.

As the door sprang open, a hollow sound reverberated through the temple, and the images of the kings' became illumined by the light which had entered. All now paid a reverential homage to these venerable rulers, and the meteors became profuse in their tokens of courtesy and submission.

After a short pause the golden king enquired:—

“Whence come ye?”

“From the world,” replied the old man.

“Whither go ye?” said the silver king.”

“To the world,” rejoined, the old man.

“What do you want of us?” asked the brazen king.

“To accompany you,” said the old man.

The compound king was just about to speak, when the golden king cried out to the meteors, who had come too near his person. "Away, fellows, away! my gold is not for vulgar gums like yours. On this they moved towards his silver brother, around whom they wound their dazzling forms and his robe became brilliantly illuminated.

"You are welcome," said the silver king, "though I cannot nurture you; satiate yourselves from without and give me your light." The meteors now moved on, passing by the brazen king unnoticed, until they reached his compound brother.

"Who will rule the world?" said the latter in a stammering voice.

"He who stands on his feet," replied the old man.

"I am he," exclaimed the compound king.

"That will be revealed," cried the old man, "for—the time is at hand!"

The fair Lilie here threw herself upon the old man's neck, and kissed him repeatedly.

"Holy Father," she exclaimed, "I give thee

a thousand thanks—thrice in one day have I now heard the awful words.

Lilie had scarcely uttered this, before she felt obliged to grasp the old man with a firmer hand, for the floor beneath them began to tremble; the old woman and the young man held closely by each other—the meteors alone seemed unconcerned at what was passing.

It was now evident that the whole temple was in motion,—like the steady progression of a ship smoothly gliding out of harbour—and the masses of superincumbent earth appeared to retire as it passed on. It encountered nothing in its rise, no rock obstructed its career.

After a few minutes a fine rain came drizzling through the aperture of the cupola; the old man pressed Lilie closer to him and said: “We are now under the stream: our goal is at hand.” Presently they appeared to stand still, but this was merely a deception—the temple continued to ascend. A strange noise was now heard above their heads—and planks and beams in loose connection began to press through the opening of the cupola. Lilie and the old

woman darted on one side to avoid the falling mass ; the old man seized the prince by the arm, and remained where he was. The ferryman's cottage—for the temple in its ascent had raised this lowly dwelling from the earth, and received it within its walls—now gradually descended, and enclosed the old man and his companion.

The women gave a shriek of anguish, and the temple shook like a ship that has suddenly foundered. Amid the twilight which encompassed them, Lilie and her companion wandered anxiously round the cottage ; the door was closed and their knocking passed unheeded. On repeating their blows they were not a little surprized to find the word emit a ringing sound. By the power of the lamp, which was now secluded from every other light, the internal part of the cottage began to form itself into silver. After a while, its exterior shape became wholly changed, for the generous metal abandoning the quaint irregularities of the wood-work, rose to a splendid dome of embossed work. A magnificent little temple

now stood in the centre of the larger one—or an altar worthy of the temple.

By a staircase from within, the prince ascended to the top of the structure; the old man with the lamp attended him, and a third person was also seen attired in a snow-white garment, and bearing a silver oar in his hand. The latter was soon recognized to be the ferryman; the former inhabitant of the cottage.

Lilie ascended the outward steps leading from the temple to the altar; but she was still obliged to keep at a distance from her lover. The old woman whose hand during the lamp concealment had continued to decrease, now cried out :

“Am I still to be unhappy? Is there none, amid all these wonders that will heal my hand?”

Her husband pointed to the open doors of the temple and said :—

“See! the day begins to dawn; haste and bathe yourself in the river.”

“What advice,” exclaimed his wife: “I should then become black all over, and en-

tirely disappear. I have not yet paid my debt."

"Go," said the old man, "and obey me. Every debt is discharged."

The old woman departed, and, at the same instant, the rays of the rising-sun fell upon the cupola. The old man, standing between Lillie and the prince now advanced, and exclaimed with a loud voice :

"Three are those who rule upon earth : Wisdom, and Splendour and Power."

At the first word, the golden king rose up; at the second, the silver; at the third, the brazen king slowly resumed his legs; while the compound king sank awkwardly together.

Notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion, all who saw him could scarcely refrain from laughter; for he neither stooped, sate or lay down, but sunk into a shapeless heap.

The meteors, who hitherto had been busied with him, now advanced, and, though pallid from the morning light, they exhibited an appearance of excellent condition, and a full

rotundity of flame. With the point of their tongues, they had penetrated to the inmost recesses of the golden artery in the colossal figure, and extracted the whole of its contents. The irregular vacant space, which this had occasioned, remained for some time open, and the figure retained its previous shape. But, as soon as the minuter veins were consumed, the image suddenly fell in ; the joints, which ought to have bent, remained stiff, and exhibited a preposterous heap of disorganized and distorted limbs. Those who could not laugh were obliged to avert their eyes ; this middle thing between form and shapelessness was disagreeable to look on.

The man with the lamp now led the young man, who still continued to gaze on vacancy, from the altar to the spot where the brazen king stood. At the feet of this powerful prince, lay a sword in a brazen scabbard. The young man girded it at his side.

“The sword on the left, and the right hand free !” exclaimed the brazen king. They then

advanced to the silver king, who lowered his sceptre to the youth. The latter received it with his left hand, and the king said in a friendly tone :

“ Feed sheep !”

As they approached the golden king, he took the garland of oak from his brows, placed it upon the young man’s head with a benedictory sign, and said :

“ Acknowledge the Most High !”

During their progress, the old man had attentively watched the emotions of the youth. On grasping the sword, his breast became elevated, his shoulders expanded, and his feet assumed a firmer step. As he received the sceptre, this vigour appeared to be modified, at the same time that it shewed itself more efficient; but, when the garland of oak was pressed upon his frontlet, the features of his face became animated, his eyes beamed with all the fire of genius, and the first word he uttered, was Lilie !”

“ Dearest Lilie !” he exclaimed, as he has-

tened towards her up the silver stair-case—for she had ascended to the summit of the altar, to view his proceedings.—“Dearest Lillie, what can he, who is endowed with every thing, desire more precious than innocence, and that soft attachment which thy bosom feels for me!”

“Oh! my friend,” he continued, turning to the old man, and pointing to the three sacred statues, “the kingdom of our fathers is certain and splendid; but you have forgotten the fourth power which rules the world, which governs it with greater certainty, and more universally—the power of Love.”

With these words, he threw himself upon the neck of Lillie, who had cast off her veil, and whose cheeks were covered with the most lovely and imperishable roses.

The old man said with a smile in reply:

“Love does not rule—it does more—it forms the mind.”

During these solemnities offered up at the shrine of fortune and rapture, no one had observed, that the day had fully dawned, while

a variety of new and unexpected objects were to be seen through the open gates. A large space, encompassed by massive pillars, formed an exterior court to the temple, at whose extremity was perceived a long and stately bridge, with numerous arches stretching across the stream. On each side, stood a spacious arcade, for the convenience of foot passengers, through which many thousands had already found their way, and others were still busily passing backwards and forwards. The broad and capacious road, in the centre, was enlivened by herds of cattle and mules, horsemen and carriages, who pressed onward without impediment from both sides of the river. All appeared to be astonished at the convenience and magnificence of the new bridge, and the young king and his beauteous queen were equally delighted with the lively and active occupation of their people, and with that mutual love which encreased their happiness.

“ Hold the serpent in honourable estimation,” said the man with the lamp; “ to her you owe your life and the bridge, which has united

these neighbouring shores to one country. Those floating and brilliant stones which you saw, the remains of her body after the sacrifice, form the foundation of this noble bridge; on those she has erected her structure, and on those she will maintain herself."

They were about to ask the old man for a solution of this extraordinary enigma, when four beautiful damsels were seen to enter the temple. The harp, the chair, and the parasol, immediately announced the attendants of Lilie; but the fourth, more beautiful than either, was a stranger, who seemed to treat her companion with sisterly attention, and who hastened through the temple to ascend the silver steps.

"Wilt thou believe me in future, dearest wife?" said the man with the lamp, to the fair stranger: "happy thou! and every human creature who has this morning bathed in the river."

The old woman, restored to youth and beauty, and of whose form not a trace remained, now twined her taper arms round

the man with the lamp, who received her caresses with calm delight.

“If I am too old for you,” said he, with a smile, “you may chuse another husband; from this day forward, no marriage is valid which is not contracted anew.”

“Do you not know then,” rejoined his wife, “that you too are become young?”

“It gives me pleasure to hear that I appear a youth in your eyes,” said her husband; “I here take this hand anew, and shall be happy to live with thee through the coming century.”

The queen welcomed her friend, and, with her and her attendants, descended to the interior of the altar, while the king, standing between the ferryman and the man with the lamp, looked at the bridge attentively, observing with evident gratification, the concourse passing over it.

This satisfaction, however, was of short duration; for he presently beheld an object, which, for a moment, excited all his indignation.

The giant, who appeared to be only half awake, was seen to stagger over the bridge, creating the greatest confusion. According to

his usual practice, he had risen halfstupified with sleep, and intended to take his customary bath in the river. Instead of water, however, he found nothing but solid ground ; and he groped about upon the broad pavement of the bridge. Although mixing most inconsiderately among both men and beasts, his presence was at first unfelt, and only productive of astonishment : but, as the sun shone in his eyes, and he raised his hands to protect them, the shadow of his enormous fists moved so rudely among the multitude, that men and beasts were indiscriminately heaped together, some were seriously injured, and others ran great risk of being precipitated into the river.

The king, as he beheld their danger, involuntarily grasped his sword ; he reflected, however, for a moment, looked first upon his sceptre, and then upon the oar and lamp of his companions.

“ I devine your thoughts,” said the man with the lamp ; “ but we and our power are equally impotent against this impotent being.”

“ Be tranquil ! he injures for the last time and happily his shadow is averted from us.”

In the meantime, the giant had drawn nearer, and, from astonishment at what he saw as his eyes expanded, had dropt his hands beside him, and entered the court with open mouth. He was marching forwards to the gate of the temple, when his progress was suddenly arrested, and he became fixed in the centre of the court. He stood like a huge colossal statue of a bright reddish stone, and his shadow marked the hours laid out upon the ground, not in numbers, but in suitable and expressive imagery.

The king was not a little rejoiced to see the shadow of this monster thus applied to a useful purpose ; nor was the queen free from surprise, as she ascended from the altar with her damsels, decorated in the most splendid attire, and beheld this extraordinary figure which almost wholly intercepted the view of the bridge.

In the meantime the people thronged to the

spot where the giant stood, and surrounded his image in mute astonishment at his transformation. From thence they proceeded to the temple, of which they appeared to be now first aware, and crowded through the doors.

At this instant the hawk soared immediately over the dome, and, catching the rays of the sun in the mirror, cast a full stream of light upon the group assembled at the altar. Amid the dusky gloom of the temple, the king, the queen, and their companions appeared irradiated by a divine effulgence, and the people prostrated themselves to the earth. When the multitude rose up from their adoration, it was found that the king and his followers had descended from the altar, to re-arch his palace by secret passages and the people dispersed through the temple to gratify their curiosity. They contemplated with awe and astonishment, the three kings which stood erect, but their curiosity was greatly excited to know what might be concealed beneath the carpet in the fourth niche; for, by whatever hand it was done, the

well meaning modesty of some one, had thrown a splendid covering over the figure of the compound king, which no eye could penetrate, and no hand ventured to remove.

The crowd felt no end to their surprize at all they saw, to their desire of examining every thing; and the still increasing multitude might have produced dangerous consequences, from their eagerness to gain admittance, had not their attention been directed to something occurring in the court without.

A shower of gold unexpectedly fell from the air, ringing and bounding on the marble pavement. Those nearest, immediately rushed to get possession of it, and the wonder was repeated by the descent of single pieces falling in various directions. It will easily be conceived, that the retiring meteors, thus amused themselves once more before their departure, and, in this ludicrous way, squandered the gold they had extracted from the compound king. The people ran eagerly about in pursuit of the falling metal, and continued to scramble and

tear each other's raiment, long after a single piece had ceased to descend. At length they gradually dispersed, each going upon his way; and, to the present day, the bridge is still crowded with passengers—and, the temple that most resorted to of any on the whole globe.

THE
FATAL MARKSMAN.

I.

“LISTEN, dame,” said Bertram the old forester of Linden to his wife, “once for all listen: it’s not many things, thou well know’st, that I would deny to thy asking: but, as for this notion, Anne, drive it clean out of thy head: root and branch lay the axe to it, the sooner the better; and never encourage the lass to think more about it. When she knows the worst, she’ll settle herself down to her crying; and when that’s over, all’s over; she submits; and all goes right. I see no good that comes of standing shilly shally, and letting the girl nurse herself with hopes of what must not be.”

“But Bertram, dear Bertram,” replied old Anne, “why not? could not our Kate live as

happily with the bailiff's clerk as with the hunter Robert? Ah! you don't know what a fine lad William is; so good, so kind-hearted,—”

“May be, like enough,” interrupted Bertram; kind-hearted, I dare say, but no hunter for all that. Now, look here, Anne: for better than two hundred years has this farm in the forest of Linden come down from father to child in my family. Had'st thou brought me a son, well and good: the farm would have gone to him; and the lass might have married whom she would. But, as the case stands,—no, I say. What the devil! have I had all this trouble and vexation of mind to get the duke's allowance for my son-in-law to stand his examination as soon as he is master of the huntsman's business; and just, when all's settled, must I go and throw the girl away? A likely thing, indeed! No, no, mistress Anne, it's no use talking. It's not altogether Robert that I care about. I don't stand upon trifles: and, if the man is not to your taste or the girl's, why look out any other active huntsman that may

take my office betimes and give us a comfortable fire-side in our old age: Robert, or not Robert, so that it be a lad of the forest: I'll never stand upon trifles: but for the clerk,—dost hear Anne?—this hero of a crow-quill, never hang about my neck or think to wheedle me again.”

For the clerk's sake old Anne would have ventured to wheedle her husband a little longer: but the forester, who knew by experience the pernicious efficacy of female eloquence, was resolved not to expose his own firmness of purpose to any further assaults or trials; and, taking down his gun from the wall, he walked out into the forest.

Scarcely had he turned the corner of the house, when a rosy light-haired face looked in at the door. It was Katharine: smiling and blushing, she stopped for a moment in agitation, and said:—“Have you succeeded, mother? was it *yes*, dear mother?” Then, bounding into the room, she fell on her mother's neck for an answer.

“Ah Kate, be not too confident when thou

should'st be prepared for the worst : thy father is a good man, as good as ever stepped, but he has his fancies ; and he is resolved to give thee to none but a hunter : he has set his heart upon it ; and he'll not go from his word ; I know him too well."

Katharine wept, and avowed her determination to die sooner than to part from her William. Her mother comforted and scolded her by turns, and at length ended by joining her tears to her daughter's. She was promising to make one more assault of a most vigorous kind upon the old forester's heart, when a knock was heard at the door—and in stepped William.—“ Ah William !”—exclaimed Katharine going up to him with streaming eyes,—“ we must part : seek some other sweetheart : me you must never marry ; father is resolved to give me to Robert, because he is a huntsman ; and my mother can do nothing for us. But, if I am to part from you, never think that I will belong to any body else : to my dying day, dear William, I will remain faithful to you.”

These bursts of wounded feeling were softened in the report of the mother: she explained to the bewildered clerk, who knew not what to make of Katharine's ejaculations, that Bertram had no objections to him personally; but that, simply with a view to the reversionary interest in his place as forester, he insisted on having a son-in-law who understood hunting.

"Is that all?" said William recovering his composure, and at the same time he caught the sobbing girl to his bosom.—"Is that all? Then be of good cheer, dearest Kate. I am not unskilled in hunting: for, at one time, I was apprenticed to my uncle Finsterbusch the forester-general; and it was only to gratify my god-father the bailiff that I exchanged the gun for the writing-desk. What care I for the reversion of the bailiff's place, unless I may take my Kate into the bailiff's house as mistress? If you can be content to look no higher than your mother did, and Will the forester is not less dear to you than Will the bailiff, then let me die if I won't quit my clerk-

ship this instant; for, in point of pleasure, there's no comparison between the jolly huntsman's life and the formal life of the town."

"Oh! thou dear kind lad," said Katharine, whilst all the clouds dispersed from her forehead and her eyes swam in a shower of glittering tears, "if thou wilt do this for my sake, then do so and speak to my father without delay—before he can possibly make any promise to Robert."

"Stay, Kate; I'll go after him this moment into the forest. He's gone in search of the venison, I dare say, that is to be delivered to-morrow into the office. Give me a gun and a pouch: I'll find him out—meet him with a jolly hunter's salutation—and offer my services to him as his hunting-boy."

Both mother and daughter fell upon his neck; helped to equip the new huntsman to the best of their skill; and looked after him as he disappeared in the forest, with hope, but yet with some anxiety.

II.

“ Upon my soul, but this William’s a fine fellow !” exclaimed the forester as he returned home with his comrade from the chace : “ Who the deuce would ever have looked for such a good shot in the flourisher of a crow-quill ? Well : to-morrow I shall speak with the bailiff myself : for it would be a sad pity if he were not to pursue the noble profession of hunting. Why, he’ll make a second Kuno. You know who Kuno was, I suppose ?” said he turning to William.

William acknowledged that he did not.

“ Not know who Kuno was ! bless my soul ! to think that I should never have told you that ? Why Kuno, you’re to understand, was my great grand-father’s father ; and was the very first man that ever occupied and cultivated this farm. He began the world no better, I’ll assure you, than a poor riding boy ; and live servant with the young knight of Wippach. Ah ! the knight liked him well, and took him

with him to all places, battles, tournaments, hunts, and what not? Well, once upon a time it happened that this young gentleman of Wip-pach was present with many other knights and nobles at a great hunt held by the duke. And in this hunt the dogs turned up a stag upon which a man was seated ringing his hands and crying piteously: for, in those days, there was a tyrannical custom among the great lords that, when a poor man had committed any slight matter of trespass against the forest-laws, they would take and bind him on the back of a stag, so that he was bruised and gored to death by the herd—or, if he escaped dying that way, he perished of hunger and thirst. Well, when the duke saw this—oh lord! but he was angry; and gave command to stop the hunting; and there and then he promised a high reward to any man that would undertake to hit the stag—but threatened him with his severest displeasure in case he wounded the man; for he was resolved, if possible, to take him alive—that he might learn who it was that had been bold enough to break his law which forbade

all such murderous deeds. Now, amongst all the nobility, not a man could be found that would undertake the job on these terms: they liked the reward, mind you, but not the risk. So, at last, who should step forward but Kuno, my own great grand-father's father—the very man that you see painted in that picture. He spoke up boldly before the duke, and said:—“ My noble liege, if it is your pleasure, with God's blessing, I will run the hazard: If I miss, my life is at your grace's disposal, and must pay the forfeit; for riches and worldly goods I have none to ransom it: but I pity the poor man; and, without fee or reward, I would have exposed my life to the same hazard if I had seen him in the hands of enemies or robbers.” This speech pleased the duke: it pleased him right well: and he bade Kuno try his luck; and again he promised him the reward in case he hit; but he did not repeat his threat in case he missed; that was, mind you, lest he should frighten him and make his hand unsteady. Well, Kuno took his gun, cocked it in God's name; and, commending

the ball with a pious prayer to the guidance of good angels, he spent no time in taking aim—but fired with a cheerful faith right into the midst of a thicket: in the same moment out rushed the hart, staggered, and fell; but the man was unwounded, except that his hands and face were somewhat scratched by the bushes.

“ The noble duke kept his word, and gave Kuno, for his reward, the farm of the forest to himself and his heirs for ever. But, lord bless us! good fortune never wanted envy; and the favour of providence, as Kuno soon learned, is followed by the jealousy of man. Many a man there was, in those days, who would gladly have had Kuno’s reward; one man for himself, perhaps; another for some poor cousin or so, or may be something nearer of kin, but come of the wrong side the blanket: and what did they do but they persuaded the duke that Kuno’s shot had hit the mark through witchcraft and black arts: “ For why?” said they, “ Kuno never took any aim at all, but fired at random ‘ a devil’s shot;’ and a devil’s shot, you’re to understand, never fails of

hitting the mark, for needs must that the devil drives." So hereupon a regulation was made, and from this the custom came, that every descendant of Kuno must undergo a trial and fire what they call his probationary shot before he is admitted tenant. However, the master of the hounds, before whom the trial takes place, can make it easy or difficult at his own pleasure. When I was admitted, guess what the master required of me : why from the bill of a wooden bird to shoot out a ring that fastened the bird to a pole. Well, well : up to this time not one of all Kuno's descendants has failed in his trial : and he that would be my son-in-law and a worthy successor to me—let me tell you, William, that man had need to make himself a thorough huntsman."

William, who had listened to this story with lively interest (as the old forester had not failed to remark with much satisfaction), rose from his seat when it was ended,—pressed the old man's hand—and promised, under his tuition, to make himself a huntsman such as even old father Kuno should have had no cause to blush for.

III.

William had scarcely lived one whole fortnight at the forest-house in his capacity of huntsman, when old Bertram, who liked him better every day, gave a formal consent to his marriage with Katharine. This promise, however, was to be kept secret until the day of the probationary shot, when the presence of the ducal master of the hounds would confer a splendour on the ceremony of the betrothing which was flattering to the old man's pride. Meantime the bridegroom elect passed his time in rapturous elevation of spirits, and forgot himself and all the world in the paradise of youthful love—so that father Bertram often said to him tauntingly, that from the day when he had hit his prime aim in obtaining Katharine's heart he had hit nothing else. The fact however, was, that, from that very day, William had met with an unaccountable run of ill-luck in hunting. Sometimes his gun would miss fire; at other times instead of a deer, he would hit the trunk of a tree. Was

his hunting-bag emptied on his return home ? Instead of partridges out came daws and crows, and, instead of a hare, perhaps a dead cat. At last the forester began to reproach him in good earnest for his heedlessness; and Kate herself became anxious for the event of his examination before the duke's commissioner.

William redoubled his attention and diligence; but, the nearer the day of trial advanced, so much the more was he persecuted by bad luck. Nearly every shot missed; and at length he grew almost afraid of pulling a trigger for fear of doing some mischief; for he had already shot a cow at pasture, and narrowly escaped wounding the herdsman.

“Nay, I stick to my own opinion,” said huntsman Rudolph one night, “somebody has cast a spell over William; for, in the regular course of nature such things could never happen; and this spell he must undo before ever he'll have any luck.”

“Pooh ! pooh ! man, what stuff you talk !” replied Bertram. “This is nothing but superstitious foolery, such as no christian hunter

should ever so much as name. Can'st tell me now, my fine fellow, what three articles be those which make an able sportsman's stock in trade ?

“ Aye, my old cock of the woods, I can tell you *that*,” said Rudolph, clearing his throat, “ or else it were a pity :

A dog, a gun, and a skilful hand,
In the forest are better than house or land.’

“ Good,” said Bertram, “ and these three together are an overmatch for all the spells in Germany.”

“ With your leave, father Bertram,” replied William, somewhat chagrined, “ here is my gun ; and I should be glad to see the man that has any fault to find with *that* : as to my skill, I shall not boast of it ; yet I think it can't be denied that I do as well as others : nevertheless, so it is—that my balls seem to fly askance, as if the wind turned them out of their course. Do but tell me what it is that I should do, and there is nothing I will not try.”

“Strange indeed!” murmured the forester, who knew not what to say.

“Take my word for it, William,” repeated Rudolph, “it is just what I tell you. Go some Friday at midnight to a cross-road, and make a circle round about you with a ram-rod or a bloody sword; bless it three times in the same words as the priest uses, but in the name of Samiel”—

“Hush! hush!” interrupted the forester angrily; “dost know what that name is? why, he’s one of Satan’s host. God keep thee and all christians out of his power!”

William crossed himself and would hear no more; however obstinately Rudolph persisted in his opinion. All night long he continued to clean his gun, to examine the screws, the spring, and every part of the lock and barrel; and, at break of day, he sallied forth to try his luck once more.

IV.

But all in vain: his pains were all thrown

away; the deer flocked round him, almost as it seemed in mockery of his skill. At ten paces distance he leveled at a roe-buck; twice his gun flashed in the pan; the third time it went off, but the deer darted off unhurt through the bushes. Cursing his fate, the unhappy hunter threw himself despondingly beneath a tree: at that moment a rustling was heard in the bushes, and out limped an old soldier with a wooden leg.

“ Good morning to you, comrade,” said the soldier, “ why so gloomy, why so gloomy? Is it body or purse that’s ailing, health or wealth is it that you’re sighing for? Or has somebody put a charm upon your gun? Come, give us a bit of tobacco; and let’s have a little chat together.”

With a surly air William gave him what he asked for, and the soldier threw himself by his side on the grass. After some desultory discussion, the conversation fell upon hunting, and William related his own bad luck. “ Let me see your gun,” said the soldier. “ Ah! I thought so: this gun has been charmed, and

you'll never get a true aim with it again : and more than that, let me tell you, if the charm was laid according to the rules of art, you'll have no better luck with any other gun you take in hand."

William shuddered, and would have urged some objection against the credibility of witchcraft; but the stranger offered to bring the question to a simple test. "To old soldiers, the like of me," said he, "there's nothing at all surprising in it. Bless your soul; I could tell you stories stranger by half, from this time to midnight. How do you think the sharpshooters would come on, that must venture here there and every where, and must pick off their man from the very heart of the thickest smoke, where it's clean impossible to see him, how must they come on, I would be glad to know, if they understood no other trick than just aim and let fire? Now here, for instance, is a ball that cannot fail to go true, because it's a gifted ball, and is proof against all the arts of darkness. Just try it now: just give it a trial: I'll answer for it, you'll not find it deceive you, I'll be surety for it."

William loaded his piece, and looked about for an aim. At a great height above the forest, like a moving speck, was hovering a large bird of prey. "There!" said Mr. Timbertoe, "that old devil up there, shoot *him*." William laughed, for the bird was floating in a region so elevated as to be scarcely discernable to the naked eye. "Nay, never doubt; shoot away;" repeated the old soldier, "I'll wager my wooden leg you'll bring him down." William fired, the black speck was seen rapidly descending; and a great vulture fell bleeding to the ground.

"Oh! bless your heart, that's nothing at all," said the soldier, observing the speechless astonishment of his companion, "not worth speaking of. Indeed it's no such great matter to learn how to cast balls as good as these; little more is wanted than some slight matter of skill, and to be sure a stout heart; for why? the work must be done in the night. I'll teach you and welcome, if we should chance to meet again; at present, however, I must be moving, for I've a d——d long march before me to-day; and I

hear it just striking seven. Meantime here's a few braces of my balls for you," and so saying he limped off. Filled with astonishment William tryed a second of the balls, and again he hit an object at an inaccessible distance: he then charged with his ordinary balls, and missed the broadest and most obvious mark. On this second trial, he determined to go after the old soldier; but the soldier had disappeared in the depths of the forest; and William was obliged to console himself with the prospect of meeting him again.

V.

In the forest-house all was pleasure when William returned, as formerly, with a load of venison, and gave practical evidence to old Bertram that he was still the same marksman he had first shewn himself in his noviciate. He should now have told the reason of his late ill-luck, and what course he had taken to remove it: but, without exactly knowing why, he shrank from telling of the inevitable balls, and laid the

blame upon a flaw in his gun which had escaped his notice until the preceeding night.

“ Now, dame, dost a’ see ?” said the forester, laughing : “ who’s wrong now, dame, I wonder ? The witchcraft lay in the gun that wanted trimming ; and the little devil, that by your account should have thrown down old father Kuno’s picture so early this morning, I’m partly of opinion lies in a cankered nail.”

“ What’s that you’re saying about a devil ?” asked William.

“ Nay, nothing at all but nonsense,” replied the old man : “ this morning, just as the clock was striking seven, the picture fell down of itself ; and so my wife will have it that all’s not right about the house.”

“ Just as it was striking seven, eh ? Ha !” And the old soldier flashed across William’s thoughts, who had taken his leave at that identical time.

“ Aye, sure enough, as it was striking seven : not a very likely time for devils to be stirring ; eh, my old dame ? eh Anne ?” at the same time chucking her under the chin with a good-na-

tured laugh. But old Anne shook her head thoughtfully, saying:—"God grant all may turn out natural!" and William changed colour a little. He resolved to put by his balls, and, at the most, only to use one upon his day of trial, lest he might be unconsciously trifling away his future happiness at the wily suggestions of a fiend. But the forester summoned him to attendance upon the chace; and, unless he were prepared to provoke the old man, and to rouse afresh all the late suspicions in regard to his skill, he found himself obliged to throw away some of his charmed balls upon such occasions.

VI.

In a few days William had so familiarised himself to the use of his enchanted balls, that he no longer regarded it with any misgiving. Every day he roamed about in the forest hoping to meet the wooden-leg again; for his stock of balls had sunk to a single pair; and the most rigorous parsimony became needful, if he would

not put to hazard his final success on the day of trial. One day, therefore, he positively declined attending the old forester a hunting; for, on the next, the duke's commissioner was expected; and it might so happen that, before the regular probation, he would call for some exhibition of his skill. At night, however, instead of the commissioner, came a messenger from him to bespeak a very large delivery of game for court, and to countermand the preparations for his own reception until that day se'nnight.

On the receipt of this news, William was ready to sink to the ground; and his alarm would certainly have raised suspicions, had it not been ascribed to the delay of his marriage. He was now under the necessity of going out to hunt, and of sacrificing, at least, one of his balls. With the other he vowed to himself that he would not part for any purpose on earth, except for the final shot before the commissioner which was to decide his fate for life.

Bertram scolded, when William came back from the forest with only a single buck; for the quantity of venison ordered was very con-

siderable. Next day he was still more provoked on seeing Rudolph return loaded with game and William with an empty bag. At night he threatened to dismiss him from his house, and to revoke the consent he had given to his marriage with Katharine, unless he brought home, at least, two roe-deer on the following morning. Katherine herself was in the greatest distress, and conjured him for love of her to apply his utmost zeal, and not to think so much about her whilst engaged in hunting.

In a despairing mood William set off to the forest. Kate, in any case, he looked upon as lost; and all that remained for him was a sad alternative between the two modes of losing her, whether by the result of this day's hunting, or of the trial before the commissioner. This was an alternative on which he felt himself incapable of deciding; and he was standing lost in gloomy contemplation of his wretched fate when all at once a troop of deer advanced close upon him. Mechanically he felt for his last ball; it seemed to weigh a hundred weight in his hands. Already he had resolved to re-

serve this treasure at any price, when suddenly he saw the old wooden-leg at a distance and apparently directing his steps towards himself. Joyfully he dropped his ball into the barrel, fired, and two roe-bucks fell to the ground. William left them lying, and hurried after the wooden-leg; but he must have struck into some other path for he had wholly disappeared.

VII.

Father Bertram was well satisfied with William; but not so was William with himself. The whole day long he went about in gloomy despondency; and even the tenderness and caresses of Kate had no power to restore him to serenity. At night-fall, he was still buried in abstraction; and, seated in a chair, he hardly noticed the lively conversation between the forester and Rudolph, till at length the former woke him out of his reverie.

“What, William, I say,” cried Bertram, “sure you’ll never sit by and hearken quietly

whilst such scandalous things are said as Rudolph has just been saying of our forefather Kuno. I'm sure, I won't." "If good angels stood by, and gave help to him and to the poor innocent man on the stag's back, why nothing but right: we read of such cases in the Old Testament; and let us thank God, for that and all his mercies and marvels; but as to black arts and devil's shots, I'll not sit and hear such things said of our Kuno. What, man? Kuno died in his bed quietly and with a christian's peace amongst his children and children's children; but, the man that tampers with the powers of darkness never makes a good end. I know *that* by what I saw myself at Prague in Bohemia, when I was an apprentice lad."

"Aye? what was that," cried Rudolph and the rest: "tell us, dear father."

"What was it? why bad enough," said Bertram, "it makes me shudder when I think of it. There was, at that time, a young man in Prague, one George Smith by name, a wild daring sort of a fellow, not but he was a fine

active lad in his way, that was terribly fond of hunting, and would often come and join us ; indeed, I may say, whenever he could. And a very fair hunter he might have proved ; but he was too hasty by far, and flung his shots away in a manner. One day, when we had been joking him on this, his pride mounted so high that nothing would serve him but he must defy all the hunters in a body : he would beat any of them at shooting : and no game should escape him whether in the air or in the forest. This was his boast : but ill he kept his word. Two days after comes a strange huntsman bolt upon us out of a thicket, and tells us that a little way off, on the main road, a man was lying half dead, and with nobody to look after him. We lads made up to the spot, and there, sure enough, lay poor George torn and clawed all to pieces, just as if he had fallen amongst wild cats : not a word could he speak ; for he was quite senseless, and hardly shewed any signs of life. We carried him to a house : one of us set off with the news to Prague ; and thither he was soon fetched. Well, this George Smith, before he died, made confession that he

had set about casting devil's balls, with an old upland hunter ; devil's balls, you understand, never miss ; and because he failed in something that he should have done, the devil had handled him so roughly, that what must pay for it but his precious life ?

“ What was it then that he failed in, ?” asked William falteringly : “ is it always the devil that is at work in such dealings ?”

“ Why, who should it be ?” rejoined the forester : “ the devil, to be sure, who else ? Some people I've heard talk of hidden powers of nature, and of the virtue of the stars. I know not : every man's free to think what he likes : but it's my opinion, and I stick to it, that it's all the devil's handicraft.”

William drew his breath more freely. “ But did George not relate what it was that brought such rough treatment upon him ?”

“ Aye, sure enough, before the magistrates he confessed all. As it drew towards midnight, it seems, he had gone with the old hunter to a cross-road : there they made a circle with a bloody sword ; and in this circle they laid a

skull and bones cross-ways. Then the old man told George what he was to do. On the stroke of eleven, he was to begin casting the balls, in number sixty and three, neither more nor less; one over or one under, as soon as twelve o'clock struck, he was a lost man. And, during all this work, he was not to speak a word, nor to step out of the circle, let what would happen. Sixty of the balls were to carry true, and only three were to miss. Well sure enough, Smith began casting the balls; but such shocking and hideous apparitions flocked about him, that at last, he shrieked out and jumped right out of the circle; instantly he fell down senseless to the ground, and never recovered his recollection till he found himself at Prague, as if waking out of a dream, in the hands of the surgeon, and with a clergyman by his side."

"God preserve all christian people from such snares of Satan," said the forester's wife, crossing herself.

"Had George then," asked Rudolph, "made a regular contract with the devil?"

"Why that's more than I'll undertake to

say," replied Bertram; "for it is written, 'Judge not.' But, let that be as it will, it can be no slight matter of a sin for a man to meddle with things that bring the Evil One about him; and may, for aught he knows, give him power over body and soul. Satan is ready enough to come of himself without any man's needing to summon him, or to make bargains with him. Besides, what need of any such help for a good christian hunter? *You know that*, William, by your own experience; with a good gun and a skilful hand, the hunter wants no devil's balls, but hits just where he *should* hit. For my part, if I had such balls, I would'nt fire them for any money; for the fiend is a wily devil, and might, upon occasion, give the ball a sly twist in its course, to serve his purposes instead of mine."

VIII.

The forester went to bed, and left William in the most wretched state of agitation. In vain he threw himself on his bed; sound sleep fled from his eyes. The delirium of a heated

fancy presented to his eyes by turns in confused groups, the old wooden-legged soldier, George, Katharine, and the ducal commissioner. Now the unfortunate boy of Prague held up his hand before him, as a bloody memento of warning: then in a moment his threatening aspect would change into the face of Kate, fainting and pale as death; and near her stood the wooden-leg, his countenance overspread with a fiendish laugh of mockery. At another time he was standing before the commissioner in the act of firing his probationary shot; he leveled, took aim, fired, and—missed. Katharine fainted away, her father rejected him for ever; then came the wooden-leg, and presented him with fresh balls; but too late—no second trial was allowed him.

So passed the night with William. At the earliest dawn he went into the forest, and bent his steps, not altogether without design, to the spot where he had met the old soldier. The fresh breezy air of the morning had chased away from his mind the gloomy phantoms of the night. “Fool!” said he to himself, “be-

cause a mystery is above thy comprehension, must it therefore be from hell? And what is there so much out of the course of nature in that which I am seeking, that supernatural powers need come to help me? Man controls the mighty powers of the brute into obedience to his will; why should he not, by the same natural arts, impress motion and direction upon the course of a bit of lifeless inert metal? Nature teems with operations which we do not comprehend: and, am I to trifle away my happiness for a superannuated prejudice? I will call up no spiritual beings, but I will summon and make use of the occult powers of nature, never troubling myself whether I can decypher her mysteries or not. I shall go in quest of the old soldier; and, if I should not find him, I shall take care to keep up my courage better than that same George of Prague; he was urged on by pride; but I by the voice of love and honour."

In this manner did Wililam discuss his own intentions: but the old soldier was no where to be found. Nobody, of whom he enquired,

had seen any such man as he had described. The next day was spent in the same search, and with no better success.

“So be it then!” said William internally: “the days that remain for my purpose are numbered. This very night I will go to the cross-road in the forest. It is a lonely spot; nobody will be there to witness my nocturnal labours: and I’ll take care not to quit the circle till my work is done.”

IX.

Twilight had set in; and William had provided himself with lead, bullet-mould, coals, and all other requisites, that he might be ready to slip out of the house unobserved immediately after supper. He was just on the point of departing, and had already wished the forester a good night, when the latter stopped him and took his hand.

“William,” said he, “I know not what is come to me, but so it is, that this evening I have an awe upon my mind, as if from some danger,

God knows what, hanging over me. Oblige me by staying this night with me. Don't look so cast down, my lad ; it's only to guard against possibilities."

Katharine immediately offered her services to sit up with her father, and was unwilling to entrust the care of him to any body else, even to her own William ; but father Bertram declined her offer.—"Another time," said he, "another time ; to-night I feel as if I should be easier if I had William with me."

"William was disposed at first to excuse himself : but Kate commended her father so earnestly to his care, that her requests were not to be resisted ; and he staid with a good grace, and put off the execution of his plan until the succeeding night.

After midnight the old forester became tranquil, and slept soundly, so that, on the following morning, he laughed at his own fears. He would have gone with William into the forest ; but William still clung to the hope of meeting his mysterious acquaintance with the wooden-leg, and, therefore, opposed his wishes with a

plausible pretext about his health. The wooden-leg, however, never appeared ; and William, a second time, resolved on the nocturnal expedition to the cross-road.

At night, when he came back from the forest, Katharine ran out joyfully to meet him.—“ Guess, William, only guess,” she cried, “ who it is that is come. There is a visitor for you, a right dear visitor : but I will not say who, for you must guess.”

William had no mind for guessing, and still less for seeing visitors. On this day, the dearest in the world, would have seemed in his eyes a troublesome intruder. He shrunk gloomily from Katharine’s welcome, and thought of turning back upon some pretence ; but, at that moment, the house-door opened, and the light of the moon discovered a venerable old man in a hunter’s dress, who stepped forwards and stretched out his arms to William.

“ William !” exclaimed a well known voice, and William found himself in the arms of his uncle. A world of affecting remembrances, from the days of childhood, remembrances of

love—of joy—and of gratitude, pressed with the weight of magic upon William's heart; amidst these his midnight purpose slipped away from his thoughts; and it was in the middle of the gayest conversation, upon the clock striking twelve, that William was first reminded with horror of the business he had neglected.

“Just one night more,” thought he, “one single night remains; to-morrow, or never!” His violent agitation did not escape his uncle's notice; but the old man ascribed it to some little weariness in his nephew, and good-naturedly apologized for having engaged him so long in conversation, by pleading his early departure, which he could not possibly put off beyond the first dawn of the next morning.

“Think not much of an odd hour or two thrown away,” said he to William on separating: “may be you'll sleep all the better for it.”

These last words had a deeper import to William's thoughts than could possibly have been meant by his uncle. He saw in them an

obscure allusion to his nocturnal plans, which, once executed, might (as he forboded) chace away from him for ever the comfort of tranquil slumbers.

X.

The third night came. Whatever was to be done—must be done on this day, for the next was the day of trial. From morning to night had old Anne, with her daughter Kate, bustled about the house, to make arrangements for the suitable reception of her dignified guest, the commissioner. At nightfall every thing was ready, and in the most becoming order. Anne embraced William on his return from the forest, and, for the first time, saluted him with the endearing name of son. The eyes of Kate sparkled with the tender emotions of a youthful bride—that loves, and is beloved. The table was decked with festal flowers, and such as rural usage has appropriated, by way of emblems, to the occasion : viands more luxurious than usual were brought out by the mother ; and bottles of choice old wine by the father.

“This night,” said Bertram, “we will keep the bridal feast: to-morrow we shall not be alone; and cannot, therefore, sit so confidentially and affectionately together; let us be happy then—as happy as if all the pleasure of our lives were to be crowded into this one night.”

The forester embraced his family, and was deeply moved.—“But Bertram,” said his wife, “let us be as happy as we will to-night, I’ve a notion the young people will be happier to-morrow. Do you know what I mean?”

“Yes, love, I know what you mean: and let the children know it also, that they may enjoy their happiness beforehand. Do you hear, children? The vicar is invited to-morrow; and as soon as William has passed his examination”——

At this moment a rattling noise and a loud cry from Katharine interrupted the forester’s speech. Kuno’s portrait had again fallen from the wall, and a corner of the frame had wounded Katharine on the temples. The nail appeared

to have been fixed too loosely in the wall, for it fell after the picture, and brought away part of the plaister.—“What, in God’s name, can be the reason,” said Bertram with vexation, “that this picture can’t be made to hang as it should do? This now is the second time that it has alarmed us. Katy, my love, art any worse?”

“No, not at all,” said she cheerfully, and wiping the blood from her tresses, “but I was sadly frightened.”

William was thrown into dreadful agitation when he beheld the death-pale countenance of Kate, and the blood upon her temples. Just so had she appeared to him on the night of his hideous visions; and all the sad images of that memorable night now revived upon his mind, and tormented him afresh. The violent shock tended greatly to stagger him in his plans for the night; but the wine, which he drank in large draughts, and more hastily than usual, for the purpose of hiding his anguish, filled him with a frantic spirit of hardihood: he resolved afresh to make the attempt boldly; and

no longer saw any thing in his purpose, but the honourable spectacle of love and courage struggling with danger.

The clock struck nine. William's heart beat violently. He sought for some pretext for withdrawing, but in vain: what pretext could a man find for quitting his young bride on their bridal festival? Time flew faster than an arrow: in the arms of love, that should have crowned him with happiness, he suffered the pangs of martyrdom. Ten o'clock was now past: and the decisive moment was at hand. Without taking leave, William stole from the side of his bride; already he was outside the house with his implements of labor, when old Anne came after him. "Whither away, William, at this time of night?" asked she anxiously. "I shot a deer, and forgot it in my hurry," was the answer. In vain she begged him to stay: all her intreaties were flung away, and even the tender caresses of Kate, whose mind misgave her, that some mystery lay buried in his hurry and agitation. William

tore himself from them both, and hastened to the forest.

XI.

The moon was in the wane, and, at this time, was rising, and resting with a dim red orb upon the horizon. Gloomy clouds were flying overhead, and at intervals darkened the whole country, which, by fits, the moon again lit up. The silvery birches and the aspen trees, rose like apparitions in the forest; and the poplars seemed to William's fevered visions, pale shadowy forms that beckoned him to retire. He shuddered; and it suddenly struck him, that the almost miraculous disturbance of his scheme on the two preceeding nights, together with the repeated and ominous falling of the picture, were the last warnings of dissuasion from a wicked enterprise, addressed to him by his better angel that was now ready to forsake him.

Once again he faltered in his purpose. Al-

ready he was on the point of returning, when suddenly a voice appeared to whisper to him : “ Fool ! hast thou not already accepted magical help : is it only for the trouble of reaping it, that thou would’st forego the main harvest of its gifts ? ” He stood still. The moon issued in splendor from behind a dark cloud, and illuminated the peaceful roof of the forester’s cottage. He could see Katharine’s chamber window, glancing under the silvery rays ; in the blindness of love, he stretched out his arms towards it, and mechanically stepped homewards. Then came a second whisper from the voice ; for a sudden gust of wind brought the sound of the clock striking the half hour : “ Away to business ! ” it seemed to say. “ Right, right ! ” he said aloud, “ Away to business ! It is weak, and childish, to turn back from a business half accomplished ; it is folly to renounce the main advantage, having already perhaps risked one’s salvation for a trifle. No : let me go through with it.”

He stepped forwards with long strides ; the wind drove the agitated clouds, again over the

face of the moon; and William plunged into the thickest gloom of the forest.

At length he stood upon the cross-way. At length the magic circle was drawn; the skulls were fixed, and the bones were laid round about. The moon buried itself deeper and deeper in the clouds; and no light was shed upon the midnight deed, except from the red lurid gleam of the fire, that waxed and waned by fits, under the gusty squalls of the wind. A remote church-clock proclaimed that it was now within a quarter of eleven. William put the ladle upon the fire, and threw in the lead, together with three bullets which had already hit the mark once: a practice, amongst those who cast the "fatal bullets," which he remembered to have heard mentioned in his apprenticeship. In the forest was now heard a pattering of rain. At intervals came flitting motions of owls, bats, and other light-shunning creatures, scared by the sudden gleams of the fire: some, dropping from the surrounding boughs, placed themselves on the magic circle, where, by their low dull croaking, they seemed

holding dialogues, in some unknown tongue, with the dead men's skulls. Their numbers increased; and, amongst them were indistinct outlines of misty forms, that went and came, some with brutal, some with human faces. Their vapoury lineaments fluctuated and obeyed the motions of the wind: one only stood unchanged, and like a shadow near to the circle; and settled the sad light of its eyes steadfastly upon William. Sometimes it would raise its pale hands, and seem to sigh: and when it raised its hands, the fire would burn more sullenly; but a grey owl would then fan with his wings and rekindle the decaying embers. William averted his eyes: for the countenance of his buried mother seemed to look out from the cloudy figure, with piteous expressions of unutterable anguish. Suddenly it struck eleven; and then the shadow vanished, with the action of one, who prays and breathes up sighs to heaven. The owls and the night-ravens flitted croaking about; and the skulls and bones rattled beneath their wings. William kneeled down on his coaly hearth; and with the last stroke of eleven, out fell the first bullet.

XII.

The owls, and the bones were now silent. But along the road came an old crooked bel-dame pall mall against the magic circle. She was hung round with wooden spoons, ladles, and other kitchen utensils; and made a hideous rattling as she moved. The owls saluted her with hooting, and stroked her with their wings. At the circle, she bowed to the bones and skulls; but the coals shot forth lambent tongues of flame against her, and she drew back her withered hands. Then she paced round the circle, and with a grin presented her wares to William. "Give me the bones," said she in a harsh guttural tone, "and I'll give thee some spoons. Give the skulls to me, love: what's the trumpery to thee, love?" and then she chaunted, with a scornful air,

There's nothing can help : 'tis an hour too late ;
Nothing can step betwixt thee and thy fate.
Shoot in the light, or shoot in the dark,
Thy bullets, be sure, shall go true to the mark.

“ Shoot the dove,” says the word of command :
And the forester bold, with “ the skilful hand,”
Levels and fires : oh ! marksman good !
The dove lies bathed in its innocent blood !
Here’s to the man that shoots the dove !
Come for the prize to me, my love !”

William was aghast with horror : but he remained quiet within the circle, and pursued his labors. The old woman was one, whom he well knew. A crazy old female beggar had formerly roamed about the neighbourhood in this attire, till at last she was lodged in a mad-house. He was at a loss to discover, whether the object now before him were the reality or an illusion. After some little pause, the old crone scattered her lumber to the right and left with an angry air, and then tottered slowly away into the gloomy depths of the forest, singing those words :

“ This to the left, and that to the right :
This and that for the bridal night.
Marksman fine, be sure and steady :
The bride she is dressed—the priest he is ready.

To-morrow, to-morrow, when day-light departs,
And twilight is spread over broken hearts,—
When the fight is fought, when the race is run,
When the strife and the anguish are over and done;
When the bride-bed is decked with a winding-sheet,
And the innocent dove has died at thy feet;
—Then comes a bride-groom for me, I trow,
That shall live with me in my house of woe.
Here's to him that shoots the dove !
Come for the prize to me, my love !”

Now came all at once a rattling as of wheels and the cracking of postillions' whips. A carriage and six drove up with outriders. “What the devil's this that stops the way?” cried the man who rode the leaders, “Make way there, I say, clear the road.” Willam looked up, and saw sparks of fire darting from the horses' hoofs, and a circle of flame about the carriage-wheels. By this he knew it to be a work of the fiend, and never stirred. “Push on, my lads, drive over him, helter skelter,” cried the same postillion, looking back to the others; and in a moment the whole equipage moved rapidly upon the circle. William cowered down to the ground, beneath the dash of the leaders fore-

legs ; but the airy train, and the carriage soared into the air with a whistling sound, round and round the circle, and vanished in a hurricane, which moved not a leaf of the trees. Some time elapsed before William recovered from his consternation. However, he compelled his trembling hands to keep firm, and cast a few bullets. At that moment, a well known church-clock at a distance, began to strike. At first the sound was a sound of comfort, connecting, as with the tones of some friendly voice, the human world with the dismal circle in which he stood, that else seemed cut off from it as by an impassable gulph : but the clock struck twice, thrice,—here he shuddered at the rapid flight of time, for his work was not a third part advanced, then it struck a fourth time. He was appalled ; every limb seemed palsied ; and the mould slipped out of his nerveless hand. With the calmness of despair, he listened to the clock, until it completed the full hour of twelve ; the knell then vibrated on the air, lingered, and died away. To sport with the solemn hour of midnight, appeared too bold an

undertaking, even for the powers of darkness. However he drew out his watch, looked, and behold ! it was no more then half past eleven.

Recovering his courage, and now fully steeled against all fresh illusions, he resumed his labours with energy. Profound quiet was all around him,—disturbed only at intervals by the owls that made a low muttering, and now and then rattled the skulls and bones together. All at once a crashing was heard in the bushes. The sound was familiar to the experienced hunter's ears ; he looked round ; and, as he expected, a wild boar sprang out and rushed up to the circle. " This," thought William, " is no deception " ; and he leaped up, seized his gun, and snapped it hastily at the wild beast ; but no spark issued from the flint : he drew his hanger ; but the bristly monster, like the carriage and horses, soared far above him into the air and vanished.

XIII.

William, thus repeatedly baffled, now has-

tened to bring up the lost time. Sixty bullets were already cast: he looked up; and suddenly the clouds opened, and the moon again threw a brilliant light over the whole country. Just then a voice was heard from the depths of the forest crying out, in great agitation,—“ William! William!” It was the voice of Kate. William saw her issue from the bushes, and fearfully look round her. Behind her panted the old woman, stretching her withered spidery arms after the flying girl, and endeavouring to catch hold of her floating garments. Katharine now collected the last remains of her exhausted strength for flight: at that moment, the old wooden-leg stepped across her path; for an instant, it checked her speed, and then the old hag caught her with her bony hands. William could contain himself no longer: he threw the mould with the last bullet out of his hands, and would have leaped out of the circle: but just then the clock struck twelve; the fiendish vision had vanished; the owls threw the skulls and bones confusedly together, and flew away;

the fire went out; and William sank exhausted to the ground.

Now came up slowly a horseman upon a black horse. He stopped at the effaced outline of the magic circle, and spoke thus: "Thou hast stood thy trial well; what would'st thou have of me?"

"Nothing of thee, nothing at all," said William: "what I want—I have prepared for myself."

"Aye; but with my help: therefore part belongs to me."

"By no means, by no means: I bargained for no help; I summoned thee not."

The horseman laughed scornfully; "Thou art bolder," said he, "than such as thou are wont to be. Take the balls which thou hast cast; sixty for thee, three for me; the sixty go true, the three go askew: all will be plain, when we meet again."

William averted his face: "I will never meet thee again," said he,—“leave me.”

"Why turnest thou away?" said the stranger with a dreadful laugh: do'st know me?"

“ No, no”—said William shuddering: I know thee not! I wish not to know thee. Be thou who thou mayest, leave me!”

The black horseman turned away his horse, and said with a gloomy solemnity—“ Thou *do'st* know me: the very hair of thy head, which stands on end, confesses for thee that thou *do'st*. I am he—whom at this moment thou namest in thy heart with horror”. So saying he vanished—followed by the dreary sound of withered leaves, and the echo of blasted boughs falling from the trees beneath which he had stood.

XVI.

“ Merciful God! what has happened to you, William?” exclaimed Kate and her mother, as William returned pale and agitated after midnight: “ you look as if fresh risen from the grave.”

“ Nothing, nothing,” said William,—“ no thing but night air; the truth is I am a little feverish.”

“ William, William !” said old Bertram stepping up to him, “ you can’t deceive me : something has met you in the forest. Why would you not stop at home ? Something has crossed you on the road, I’ll swear.

William was struck with the old man’s seriousness, and replied—“ Well, yes ; I acknowledge, some thing *has* crossed me. But wait for nine days : before then, you know yourself that—”

“ Gladly, gladly, my son,” said Bertram : “ and God be praised, that it is any thing of that kind which can wait for nine days. Trouble him not, wife ; Kate, leave him at peace ! —Beshrew me, but I had nearly done thee wrong, William, in my thoughts, now, my good lad, go to bed, and rest thyself. “ Night,” says the proverb, “ is no man’s friend.” But be of good cheer : the man that is in his vocation, and walks only in lawful paths, may bid defiance to the fiends of darkness, and all their works.”

William needed his utmost powers of dissimulation to disguise from the old man’s penetration how little his suspicions had done him

injustice. This indulgent affection of father Bertram, and such unshaken confidence in his uprightness, wrung his heart. He hurried to his bed-room, with full determination to destroy the accursed bullets. One only will I keep, only one I will use," said he, holding out his supplicating hands pressed palm to palm with bitter tears towards heaven. "Oh let the purpose, let the purpose, plead for the offence ; plead for me the anguish of my heart, and the trial which I could not bear ! I will humble, I will abase myself in the sight of God : with a thousand, with ten thousand penitential acts I will wash out the guilt of my transgression. But can I, can I, now go back, without making shipwreck of all things—of my happiness, my honour, my darling Kate ?"

Somewhat tranquillised by this view of his own conduct, he beheld the morning dawn with more calmness than he had anticipated.

XV.

The ducal commissioner arrived, and expressed a wish, previously to the decisive trial,

of making a little hunting excursion in company with the young forester. "For," said he, "it is all right to keep up old usages: but, between ourselves, the hunter's skill is best shewn in the forest. So jump up, Mr. Forester elect; and let's away to the forest!"

William turned pale, and would have made excuses; but, as these availed nothing with the commissioner, he begged at least, that he might be allowed to stand his trial first. Old Bertram shook his head thoughtfully:—"William, William!" said he with a deep tremulous tone. William withdrew instantly; and in a few moments he was equipped for the chase, and with Bertram followed the commissioner into the forest.

The old forester sought to suppress his misgivings, but struggled in vain to assume a cheerful aspect. Katharine too was dejected and agitated; and went about her household labours as if dreaming. "Was it not possible," she had asked her father, "to put off the trial?" "I thought of that also," replied he, and he kissed her in silence. Recovering himself imme-

diately, he congratulated his daughter on the day—and reminded her of her bridal garland.

The garland had been locked up by old Anne in a drawer; and, hastily attempting to open it, she injured the lock. A child was therefore despatched to a shop to fetch another garland for the bride. “Bring the handsomest they have,” cried dame Anne after the child: but the child, in its simplicity, pitched upon that which glittered most: and this happened to be a bride’s funeral garland of myrtle and rosemary entwined with silver, which themistress of the shop, not knowing the circumstances, allowed the child to carry off. The bride and her mother well understood the ominous import of this accident; each shuddered; and flinging her arms about the other’s neck, sought to stifle her horror in a laugh at the child’s blunder. The lock was now tried once more; it opened readily; the coronals were exchanged; and the beautiful tresses of Katharine were enwreathed with the blooming garland of a bride.

XVI.

The hunting party returned. The commissioner was inexhaustible in William's praise. "After such proofs of skill," said he, "it seems next to ridiculous that I should call for any other test: but to satisfy old ordinances, we are sometimes obliged to do more than is absolutely needful; and so we will despatch the matter as briefly as possible. Yonder is a dove sitting on that pillar: level, and bring her down."

"Oh! not *that*—not *that*, for God's sake, William," cried Katharine hastening to the spot, "shoot not, for God's sake, at the dove. Ah! William, last night I dreamed that I was a white dove; and my mother put a ring about my neck; then came you, and in a moment my mother was covered with blood."

William drew back his piece which he had already leveled; but the commissioner laughed. "Eh, what?" said he, "so timorous? That will never do for a forester's wife: courage,

young bride, courage!—"Or stay, may be the dove is a pet dove of your own?"

"No, it's not that"—said Katharine—"but the dream has sadly sunk my spirits." "Well, then," said the commissioner, "If that's all, pluck 'em up again! and so fire away, Mr. Forester."

He fired: and at the same instant, with a piercing shriek, fell Katharine to the ground.

"Strange girl!" said the commissioner, fancying that she had fallen only from panic, and raised her up: but a stream of blood flowed down her face; her forehead was shattered; and a bullet lay sunk in the wound.

"What's the matter?" exclaimed William, as the cry resounded behind him. He turned and saw Kate with a deathly paleness lying stretched in her blood. By her side stood the old wooden-leg, laughing in fiendish mockery, and snarling out—"Sixty go true, three go askew." In the madness of wrath, William drew his hanger, and made a thrust at the hideous creature. "Accursed devil!"—cried he in tones of despair—"Is it thus thou hast deluded

me?" More he had no power to utter; for he sank insensible to the ground close by his bleeding bride.

The commissioner and the priest sought vainly to speak comfort to the desolate parents. Scarce had the aged mother laid the ominous funeral garland upon the bosom of her daughter's corps, when she wept away the last tears of her unfathomable grief. The solitary father soon followed her. William, the Fatal Marksman, wore away his days in the mad-house.

THE
HOARD
OF THE
NIBELUNGEN.

IT was a gloomy autumnal night, as the moon, sinking amidst dark clouds, cast a fearful light upon the ruins of the fortress of Worms on the Adda, before which two sentinels were pacing to and fro, being stationed there in order to prevent the approach of any one towards the treasures which were supposed to be concealed within the vaults of that ancient castle.

“Comrade!” exclaimed the younger of the two to his companion, “this is, methinks, but an awful place—one that may well cause even a brave heart to quake. What ghastly shapes are those I discern yonder?”

“What should they be save the old leafless trees that rear their branches so fantastically that I warrant me thy fancy apprehends them to be goblins?—It is well for us if, ere midnight, we behold nothing of more frightful aspect.”

“Thou terrifiest me, Bertram,” said the youth with a trembling voice.

“Hush! not a word more until the moon shall have disappeared: after that time, I will satisfy thy curiosity.”

Wrapping themselves up in their mantles, they continued to pace in silence: Hubert, the younger soldier, feeling all the while a strange temptation to quit his post, so great was the dread inspired by the words of his companion, which led him to expect every moment the appearance of some horrible phantom. His imagination embodied forth strange shapes from the surrounding objects, seen as they were in dim obscurity, until the increasing darkness somewhat diminished his fears, by rendering the forms of things less visible. Suddenly, however, a gleaming light was seen to proceed from the ruined portal of the castle which, nearly choaked

up with rubbish and fallen stones, had not for many years been entered by any thing mortal. The paly, bluish light served to render visible a gigantic figure frocked like a monk, yet wearing a casque instead of a cowl, and armed with a long spear. It rode a steed of similar proportions to itself, and, crossing through the courtyard passed the two sentinels, who watched its course in speechless terror; then winding down the valley, it crossed a small brook and as suddenly disappeared at the entrance of a cavern.

“Didst thou behold it?” asked Bertram, after a long pause.

“Yes,” replied his terrified companion as soon as his tongue could recover its power of articulation.

“That figure,” continued the former, “is the Monk Ilsan, whose spirit is doomed to taste no repose, but, accoutred as thou hast witnessed, must watch the hoard of the Nibelungen, which is deposited, as they say, in the vaults of this ruin; and which cannot be removed by mortal’s hands save at this hour, when he quits it for a

season. How seemeth it to thee?—What if we were now to enter”—

“Nay, I conjure thee by all that is holy, venture not so frightful an attempt.”

“Fear not, boy, the treasure may be buried still for me: for it produced of old so much misfortune, and wrought such ills to those who thirsted after it, that it will hardly work the weal of him who shall ever obtain it. I have heard that which would root out all greediness after such unholy lucre.”

Hubert marked well that his comrade wished to be questioned as to the secret of which he hinted himself to be in possession; yet, so great was his terror that it repressed all curiosity, and he would fain have spared Hildebrand the task of narrating the history: but the latter felt too eager to unbosom himself, and perhaps also to quiet his own apprehensions by conversation, that he forthwith began to relate the following narrative.

In those early ages, when Rhetia had its own kings, Gibich was the sovereign of this territory, who, from his attachment to, and constant

residence in this castle, was generally denominated the king of Worms. What his territory wanted in extent was amply atoned for by its fertility and richness, and by that wealth which is of more value than mines of gold or jewels,—that which gladdens and attaches a people to their native soil.

Gibich prized not the precious metals; even his crown and the simple ornaments which he occasionally wore, were only of iron. And, if on any high festival he sought some gayer decoration, it was but a simple chaplet of flowers, which his daughter the Princess Grimhilda, never failed to present to him.

One day as she was wandering among her flowers, considering which she should select for the above-mentioned purpose, she observed a rose-bush of extraordinary beauty: there grew upon it but a single rose, but this was of such surpassing elegance, that it seemed to combine in itself the excellencies of every other flower. Grimhilda delayed not long to pluck it, not however for her father, as was her first intention, but for herself, so greatly was

she fascinated with its delightful odour, and beautiful tints.

“ Grimhilda,” cried a gentle voice from the bush, “ Lo, this is the first deviation from thy duty, and from the path of severe rectitude. Thy vanity is more powerful than thy affection. Yet go ; happy will it be for thee should this prove thy greatest error. But beware that thou lovest not the flower which hath tempted thee.’ ”

Grimhilda stood fixed in amazement before the speaking bush, and greatly as she felt ashamed at this reproof, she was still more curious to listen, but the voice was heard no more, so that she was obliged to depart ungratified. Proud of the beautiful ornament she now possessed, fairer than aught she had before worn, she went to welcome the princess Brunilda, the betrothed of her brother Gundachar. The latter displayed to her, her own costly jewels, and reproached her with her simple taste in preferring fading flowers to precious stones, whose dies ever blaze with the same unquenched lustre. Grimhilda soon felt ashamed of her poverty in

this respect, and requested of her father that he would enable her to appear with equal splendour.

“My daughter,” replied Gibich, “such may not be. The kings of the Netherlands have long been in possession of the hoard of the Nibelungen; and can command all the treasures that grow within the bowels of the earth; therefore, can Brunhilda, their descendant, attire herself with a profusion of these gauds. Yet their splendour is not half so lovely as the milder lustre of thy flower.”

But, alas ! Grimhilda heeded not the words of her father : her attachment to her flowers was now quite destroyed, while, on the contrary, her cupidity was increased by what she heard of the hoard of the Nibelungen. Her thoughts were continually occupied with the idea of this treasure : it was even the subject of her dreams and the constant object of her enquiries. Many were those who told her strange tales concerning it, yet could no one either pretend to have seen it, or give any satisfactory account of it.

About this time it chanced that Brunilda's father died, and her brother Fradolfo, succeeded

to the throne. On this occasion, that princess went to pay him a visit of congratulation, accompanied by Grimhilda; and the latter was so dazzled by the splendour and luxury which she witnessed at the court of this new monarch, that, on her return home, she could no longer find any enjoyment in her wonted amusements.

The ambitious Brunilda, on her side, was not less discomfited, when she reflected that she was only the consort of a prince; for she longed to enjoy the title of queen, while, on the other hand, nothing could console Grimhilda for the want of the treasure of the Nibelungen; and she accordingly set about devising every means in her power, in order to obtain the object of her craving desires. She endeavoured to persuade her lover, the noble Rudiger, to second her designs, asserting that the hoard of the Nibelungen could not be deemed the exclusive property of any single mortal, but was free for all who chose to claim it by the sword. Her arguments, however, failed to convince Rudiger of the lawfulness of such an enterprize, and they parted, mutually dissatisfied with each other.

The two princesses were compelled to devour their respective discontents in secret, since they could not enter into reciprocal confidence. Brunilda, could not avow to her sister-in-law, that she looked forward with impatience to the time when her husband should possess the crown; neither durst Grimhilda hint how passionately she longed to become mistress of the treasures possessed by the family of the former. Yet, on other topics, their conversation was unrestrained; Grimhilda, therefore, as they were one day walking together, related her adventure with the speaking rose-bud.

“I am not all surprised,” returned her companion, “at what you now tell me, singular as it is; for there are doubtless, in this country, many such plants as that which you mention.”

“What induces you,” enquired Grimhilda, “to entertain such an idea? For my part, it is the only instance of the kind, which I have ever met with.”

“That may possibly chance to be the case.

But would you know how I became so well acquainted with these circumstances, relative to this country, look up and you will see advancing hither the very person who has been my informer."

Upon this, Grimhilda raised her eyes, and beheld approaching towards them, two monks, riding upon mules, with whose persons she was not unacquainted.

Rhetia was, at this period, in the darkness of heathenism ; nevertheless, some pious men had come as missionaries from Rome and the East, for the purpose of propagating christianity through this benighted land. They were disciples of Saint Cecilius, who converted Spain and Gaul ; but whether they ressembled that holy man, in the purity of their lives, will best appear from the sequel of our history. At first they had to contend with difficulties, and to endure much opposition, but when Gibich, the present monarch came to the crown, he rather favoured their designs, than otherwise, and they, in consequence, obtained more consideration. At

the period of which we are now speaking, they possessed a noble convent, and their numbers were considerably increased.

Of these religious, the principal was the monk Ilsan, a man every way qualified to obtain proselytes: nor had he failed to ingratiate himself, in no ordinary degree, with both the princesses.

To Ilsan, then, for he was one of the two monks whose approach we have just mentioned, did Grimhilda relate the subject of their conversation, demanding, at the same time, whether he had met with many similar instances.

“Such plants and trees,” replied the monk, “are by no means uncommon, and, if they are not known, it is because people do not understand in what manner they are to be made to exert this power.” Then, after having given them some instructions how to proceed in order to accomplish this purpose, he made his obeisance to the dames, and proceeded onwards with his companion.

“Both Brunilda and her sister had their reasons for enquiring into these mysteries of na-

ture, wishing to consult these oracles as to their future destinies. For this purpose they separated, and took different directions. The latter again approached the rose-bush, and put some queries to it, but the only answer she obtained, was certain vague hints, as to the necessity of exerting all her caution and prudence. Brunilda, on the contrary, returned better pleased with her success, for she informed Grimhilda that, in reply to her demands as to the future, it had been plainly intimated to her, that she should possess the crown of Burgundy, and, at the same, time the measures had been revealed to her, which she was to employ for the attainment of this end.

Events shortly tended to verify this prediction. Gundachar urged his father to furnish him with the means of entering upon an expedition against the Burgundians. At first Gibich was unwilling to accede to the desire of his son, but at length, wearied by his solicitations, was fain to comply; and the prince, accompanied by his consort, set out to commence hostilities.

Grimhilda, in the mean while, having consulted some others of the sylvan oracles, obtained answers more favourable to her wishes, being informed that, if she dismissed Rudiger, and accepted the hand of Fradolfo, that she would secure to herself the treasure which was the object of her views. It cost her indeed no little to fulfill the former of these conditions, since she really entertained for the worthy cavalier all the attachment, of which a heart, now became the prey of ambition and avarice, was susceptible. But the latter passions triumphed over affection; she therefore dismissed her faithful suitor, and began to employ all her arts to obtain the latter as her suitor.

No object could be less worthy of fair lady's love, or more unlikely to awaken any thing resembling an interest in his behalf than Fradolfo. Destitute of any thing that might announce his dignified station, his countenance was marked by no traits, save those impressed by a mean and greedy avarice and by insolent pride, which latter feeling, arose from the possession of the hoard of the Nibelungen.—

not, however, that he was acquainted with its value, or employed it for any useful purpose, since he had not even ventured to open the chests in which it was deposited. Had he ventured to touch this precious deposit at all, it had doubtless been employed by him in promoting his ambitious views, and in obtaining by the dint of gold that extent of territory, which he was too cowardly to attempt to acquire by the sword.

As a suitor he had never proved successful, so little was he formed to captivate the female heart : he was accordingly not a little flattered by Grimhilda's advances. Besides the princess of Rhetia was a match that seconded his ambitious views ; he did not, therefore, turn a deaf ear to father Ilsan, when that worthy monk, who undertook to negotiate this courtship, made him acquainted with the princess's inclination.

The monk, on his side, was eager for the success of this affair, for Rudiger had long been the object of his hatred : his avarice, moreover, was excited by the hope of participating in

those treasures which he was about to assist Grimhilda in acquiring. So eloquently, therefore, did he represent to Fradolfo the advantages that would accrue from his union with Grimhilda, that the prince eagerly concluded the match.

The new-made queen deemed herself the most fortunate of her sex ; not in the consort whom she had thus obtained, for him she appreciated as he deserved, but on account of the wealth of which she thus saw herself become the mistress. The first and most eager request that she made to her lord, after their marriage, was, that he would shew her those treasures, which were the real object of her affection.

“ Dear spouse,” replied Fradolfo to her solicitations, “ well hast thou acquired the right to such a demand ; and certain am I, that I may confide this wealth to thy keeping. This key will admit thee to the vault, wherein it is deposited. Thou mayest go thither whenever thou choosest, to feast thy eyes with beholding the chests which contain it, but heed, I beseech thee, that thou searchest no farther.

Even I have never yet indulged myself beyond this, and greatly do I fear that, wert thou to do so, some misfortune would befall our house."

We know not whether Fradolfo had really been warned by any tradition, that there was danger attached to this gratification of a natural curiosity; or whether he said thus merely in order to restrain his wife from touching the treasure. Certain, however, it is, that this intelligence was far from pleasing to Grimhilda; although notwithstanding her reluctance, she was obliged to promise obedience. All, therefore, that she could do was daily to visit the vaults, in company with Fradolfo, and listen to him while he recounted to her greedy ear, the immense wealth contained in those chests: how that covered with crimson velvet, was filled with gold dust out of the river Pison, the silver one with diamonds of Golconda, each the size of an ostrich's egg, and the golden one with rose-coloured pearls, fished up from the depths of the Pacific Ocean. But these formed the least part of the hoard of the Nibelungen: the other chests were filled with

riches still more valuable. In the last chest, which was covered only with ordinary black leather, was deposited, as Fradolfo informed her, the most precious article of all, namely two old parchment manuscripts, in which were disclosed secrets and mysteries of the highest import.

“But tell me, my lord,” said Grimhilda, “may we never behold, or make use of any part of this immense wealth?”

“Wherefore not?” replied he, “is it not possible to be benefitted by riches except we count them over with our hands, or view them with our eyes? doth not abundance already reign in our palace, although thou knowest not the source whence it is derived?”

Grimhilda was obliged to content herself with this mysterious reply; but, whenever he made her any present, she would eagerly enquire whether it was any part of the treasure of the Nibelungen, which his silence always led her to interpret as being the case, a circumstance that afforded her much satisfaction.

During all this time Fradolfo made no preparations for quitting the court of his father-in-

law, but seemed so attached to Rhetia, that it was whispered he was already impatient to be put in possession of this country.

While these events were taking place at the court of Gibich, Gundachar proved successful to the utmost of his hopes, and was already become king of Burgundy, a rank which he divided with his two brothers, Gernot and Giseherr. The crown which the princes of Rhetia had thus acquired, amply recompensed them, as Fradolfo imagined, for the loss of their paternal kingdom; for, after the manner of many generous people, he gave every one else credit for being much more easily satisfied with what fell to their lot, than he himself was. He himself, however, was by no means contented with the title of king of the Netherlands, but aspired also to the possession of Rhetia.

The sons of Gibich, on the contrary, were inspired with nobler sentiments than Fradolfo could comprehend; for, although the ambition of his consort had excited Gundachar to attempt this conquest, and although he now found himself in possession of the crown promised by the

oracle which Brunilda had consulted, his object had been to acquire it for his father. Fradolfo, however, regarded this declared intention as a mere pretext on the part of the brothers, now that they found themselves at the head of a victorious army, to seize on their father's kingdom, a kingdom to which he conceived that he had acquired a just right by his marriage with Grimhilda. In these circumstances, there was no room for delay ; he came at once, therefore, to the desperate resolution of imbruing his hands in the blood of the aged monarch. Grimhilda was not, indeed, an accomplice in this murderous scheme ; but neither did she give herself any trouble to enquire into it, and bring to light the real perpetrator, being little disposed to regret an event which, by making her queen of Rhetia, was so gratifying to her pride. She had besides, long ceased to entertain any feelings of filial piety, so completely was she under the dominion of the passions of ambition and avarice. Although, therefore, she was clad in all the outward guise of deep sorrow, her heart was filled with joy.

Shortly after this event, as she was sitting with her consort at a costly banquet, it was announced that a minstrel was at the gate of the palace, earnestly soliciting that he might be permitted to exhibit his skill in the presence of the royal pair. Leave being granted for his appearance, the minstrel shortly after entered the hall attended by a companion. With a haughty step, and dauntless air, ill suiting the humility of their petition, they advanced towards the raised part of the hall, where the monarch and his consort were seated at table. Without deigning to make the least sign of respectful salutation, the minstrel struck his harp wildly, and produced tones that filled all who heard them with astonishment and horror. Aghast, and rivetted to their seats with awe, neither Fradolfo nor the queen could find any voice to interrupt these dreadful strains. But, if the prelude of the minstrel was such as to inspire terror, how greatly was that feeling increased, when, with a voice that caused every bosom to thrill with affright, he began to chaunt the atrocious deeds of the monarch in whose

presence he stood, and sung of Gibich's murder, the impious cruelty of Fradolfo, and of Grimhilda's unnatural ambition, threatening speedy vengeance on the criminals. Scarcely had he pronounced the vengeance that was about to overtake them, ere his companion's sword had pierced the monarch's heart. Uttering a deep shriek Grimhilda sank beside the corpse of her husband: instead, however, of sacrificing her also, the stranger, yet holding the reeking brand, spurned her from him exclaiming: "Accursed wretch, thou art unworthy to perish by such an instrument; I leave thee therefore, to the just resentment of heaven." Then turning towards the trembling attendants, who, struck with awe, had lost all power of interposing, he exclaimed: "Rhetians, acknowledge the king of Burgundy and his brothers as your sovereigns; this kingdom is theirs, nor will it be long ere they arrive to claim their inheritance, and avenge the blood of their parent."

The pretended minstrel and his companion were Volcker, and the Knight Hagen von

Troy, the friends of Rudiger, who, burning to punish the perfidy of Grimhilda towards that brave warrior, and the murder of Gibich, had had recourse to this stratagem.

Grimhilda was now borne off to her apartment from this scene of horror, and was attended by the monk Ilsan, who had been a silent witness of the whole transaction without the power, and perhaps too, without the desire of hindering it; for, to confess the truth, he had never been greatly attached to Fradolfo, whom he found less easily led to his views than the queen. On the recovery of the latter, the monk was at no loss to find topics of consolation, hinting that Fradolfo had left his most valuable part, namely, the treasure of the Nibelungen, behind him, and that, as to his personal loss, it was one that there would be no great difficulty in supplying. Nor did his efforts to soothe her grief prove unavailing, for the mention of the treasure, which she now deemed entirely in her own power, failed not to have its due effect.

“It is now in your power,” continued the

monk, “to renumerate yourself for the sacrifice which you have made in uniting yourself to one so unworthy of your youth and beauty, by taking immediate possession of that wealth of which he grudged you even the view. You may now indulge in all the liberality to which your own disposition prompts you. As to the interdiction which he pretended, existed against opening the treasures, it was either mere superstition, or suspicious caution, in order to conceal them as much as possible from you.”

These arguments failed not to have their weight with Grimhilda, who, forgetting all that had so recently occurred, thought of nothing save the opportunity of examining the treasure; and, notwithstanding the indecency of gratifying her curiosity while her husband's remains lay yet unburied, she immediately proceeded with the monk to the subterraneous vault where it was deposited.

Both felt equal impatience to feast their eyes with this unbounded wealth, but the monk, better practiced in the arts of dissimulation,

concealed from Grimhilda the joy which he felt on this occasion.

Having unlocked the door of the vault, they ordered their attendants to place the torches, which they had brought with them, in the vault and then retire. Ilsan, who till now had never beheld aught of the treasure, was struck with astonishment when he saw the magnificence of the chests that contained it, although his impatience to explore them was so great that he hardly deigned to examine their beauty very minutely. The key was now applied to the first chest, but, how great was their mortification on its being opened, to find that it contained nothing. The rest were opened successively, but all proved equally empty, save the small black leathern one, in which were the two manuscripts.

This unpleasant discovery deprived them both, for some time, of the power of expressing their concern; at length, as soon as she recovered her speech, Grimhilda accused the monk of tempting her to the commission of a deed for which she was now so severely punished. "I

might have foreseen that this would be the case," cried she in a tone of extreme bitterness, "Idiot that I was not to attend to the warnings given to me by my husband, who, doubtless, was well acquainted with the mysterious nature of the treasure, and therefore wisely forbore to gratify my curiosity respecting it."

"Lady," returned the monk, "spare these reproaches, which, on reflection, you must own that I do not merit. But I can pardon this injustice, attributing it, as I do, to your disappointment. Reflect, however, that this is now no time to loiter here. It behoves us, forthwith, to prepare for the assault which your brothers will, doubtless, shortly make on this castle."

Grimhilda was obliged to acquiesce in the prudence of these remarks, and they then quitted the vault with very different feelings from those with which, but a short time before, they had entered it.

All that now remained for them to do was, to take vengeance, if possible, on the knights who had sacrificed Fradolfo to their indignation, and to prepare, as far as circumstances would permit, against any future attack. Greatly too, did Grimhilda fear that her brothers would

now be disposed to take up arms against her. Her own subjects were by no means deficient in valour, yet they wanted a resolute and able leader to head them in battle. It was in vain to apply to Rudiger for assistance, since it was his party who had slain her husband. Thus, not knowing where to seek an ally, or how best to rescue herself from the danger which she perceived to be approaching Grimhilda gave herself up to despair. She determined, therefore, not to offer resistance to an enemy, but merely to provide for her own personal safety. For this purpose, she again examined the vault, as likely to prove the most secure place of refuge in case of danger, or, should her flight be traced thither or her return intercepted, she determined to die there rather than in the face of day.

On reaching the vault the wretched Grimhilda found that a new misfortune awaited her. Of the numerous chests and caskets which had contained the treasure of the Nibelungen, and which, of themselves, were no inconsiderable prize, she perceived that only a few remained, and those the least valuable ones.

Among those that were there still, was the one with the manuscripts, which had been left unplundered as not deserving attention. Having now nothing better to divert her melancholy reflexions, she began to turn over the leaves of these volumes, and at length, after perusing a few pages, became so interested in their contents that she continued to read the whole of that and the following day, hardly stopping for the purpose of taking necessary refreshment, so intent was she upon the mysterious knowledge which those books disclosed. It was to no purpose that her attendants, who had sought her here, entreated her to desist from reading, and to retire to repose. She heeded them not; nor was it till the third day, when she was informed that the Burgundian army was quickly approaching, that she could be prevailed upon to rise from her task. Instead, however, of proceeding to issue those orders which this emergency demanded, to the great astonishment of all, she commanded that a bath should be instantly prepared. This extraordinary conduct led

many of her attendants to conclude that her unusual and prolonged studies had disordered her intellect; nevertheless, her request was complied with, and the bath prepared.

Having bathed and afterwards arrayed herself in her most costly and splendid attire, she proceeded to the ramparts of the castle for the purpose of encouraging her troops to a brave resistance. Her presence seemed instantly to operate upon them most effectively; for, although they had just before began to give way to the Burgundians, they now swore to defend their mistress to the very last. Wherever, too, the queen appeared, the enemy seemed to retreat as if struck with a sudden awe; even Hagen himself, who was about to enter a breach forced by his men, stopped at beholding Grimhilda, and called off his followers. In a short time, the Burgundians demanded a truce, which was readily granted them, and the knights were invited by the queen to partake of a royal banquet. The remainder of the day was spent in mirth and carousing, for the Burgundians appeared now to

have entirely given up all hostile intentions. The only aim of each knight, was, how best he might ingratiate himself with his royal entertainer, and obtain her regard. Her own attendants, who were themselves struck by her extraordinary beauty attributed it to some magic that she had learnt out of those mystical books. While the knights continued to drain repeated bowls, and, at the same time, to imbibe large draughts of love from her eyes, Grimhilda related all the events connected with her marriage, with king Gibich's death, and Fradolfo's murder: not perhaps altogether with that rigid adherence to truth, that one less interested might have observed, yet with so much eloquence, as effectually to convince her hearers, and her brothers among the rest, of her complete innocence.

On her retiring to her apartment, Grimhilda was entreated by Irnfrieda, her favourite attendant, to inform her by what means she had secured to herself such success, and whether she was not indebted to some supernatural power?

“Irnfrieda,” replied the queen, “for you I have no secrets. Know then, that the two manuscripts which I found in the vault, the only remains of the treasures of the Nibelungen, are replete with the most wonderful and mysterious lore. The study, which I have already bestowed upon them, has been sufficient to put me in possession of one or two important secrets—probably the least important of those contained in those mystic books, yet such as have already proved of extraordinary service to me, and from which I expect, on the morrow, to obtain still more valuable assistance. The homage, which has this day been paid to my beauty, is nothing. I must be revenged—the treasure of the Nibelungen, must, if it still exists, be restored to me—Hagen must die—Rudiger must again be at my feet, the slave of my charms. But go now to rest. To-morrow shall be a day of triumph, both for myself, and thee. In possession of the hoard of the Nibelungen, and endued with power over spirits, and over all the elements of nature, be assured that Grimhilda, will not

forget the meed due to thy fidelity and attachment."

Flattering, indeed, were the dreams of unbounded power in which she now indulged. The unexpected success that she had just obtained, led her to hope every thing with regard to the future, and to anticipate complete success in whatever she might undertake. Little did she apprehend, that the spells which she had found of such efficacy, retained their power for no longer than a single day; but, had she consulted her mirror the following morning, she could not but have been struck with astonishment at the change, which her person had experienced in the course of the night. Tidings, singular as they were important, left her no time to attend to her toilette; for, no sooner did she awake, than it was announced to her that her brothers, and all their followers had departed at break of day, at the same time a letter was put into her hands, which they informed her that, they had every reason to believe they had, on the preceding evening, been made the dupes of magic spells

and enchantment, aided by the fumes of wine; and that they were now far from being convinced of her innocence, with regard to the death of their father. On perusing this letter Grimhilda was seized with the utmost rage.

“Do they think to escape my power?” exclaimed she. “No, if there be the least virtue in those mystic books, they shall soon feel the dire effects of my resentment. Come, Irnfrieda,” continued she to her attendant, “let us hasten to consult those magic oracles, and see what punishment they will afford us, with which to overtake those who dare to oppose me. I thought yester eve, that I should have occasion to employ my power only against those who have possessed themselves of the treasure of the Nibelungen, and to revenge myself on Hagen and Rudiger; but I now find that my brothers, also, are among my enemies.”

So saying, accompanied by Irnfrieda, she descended to the vault, impatient to execute her threats. But, what was her astonishment

and horror, on perceiving that the remaining chests, and the books had now disappeared ! She now raved and wept by turns. At one while she denounced the most horrible imprecations against those who had thus robbed her of that which would have armed her with supernatural power : then again, conscious of her impotence to execute these threats, and aware that she was thus stripped of every resource, she loudly bewailed her unhappy destiny. Bitterly too, did she accuse her own folly, for having suffered so precious a prize to remain in the vault, since, had she removed it to her own private apartments, it had, probably, now been safe. The secrets which she had learnt were comparatively of but little importance. All that she now knew, was but a few spells serving to heighten her personal charms, and the effect even of these was but of short duration ; so that she was but very scantily provided to sustain the reputation of an enchantress with any tolerable success.

All, therefore, that now remained for Grimhilda to do in these desperate circumstances,

was to employ the little skill that was yet left her to the best advantage; nor was she at all deficient in the kind of prudence necessary to avail herself of it to the utmost. It is true, that she had little more than beauty at her command, but she was somewhat comforted by reflecting, that, even in the ordinary course of human affairs, this is frequently sufficient to atchieve miracles: she hoped, therefore, that it would procure for her a lover able to avenge her upon all her enemies; and, aided by her trusty confidante Irnfrieda, and her no less favoured counsellor the monk Ilisan, she began to devise various plans for accomplishing her schemes of vengeance and ambition.

At no great distance from the castle of Worms lay the beautiful Forben valley, the very spot where Grimhilda plucked the rose from the speaking bush. Rich meadows and luxuriant woods, intermingled with declivities and steep rocks, and watered by the Adda, presented a landscape of extraordinary variety and beauty. This was the place which

Grimhilda selected for the theatre of her exploits, exerting on it all the power of which she was possessed. To this end, she enclosed it with a magic boundary, which, although it presented no obstacle to those who wished to enter, it was impossible to repass. Within this space the whole atmosphere was impregnated with a delicious odour of intoxicating quality, which deprived those who breathed it of all reflection, and of all wish to escape.

“No sooner was this enchanted garden completed than Grimhilda fixed her residence there; both for greater security from her enemies, and in order to receive the homage of those, who repairing thither, failed not to be fascinated by her charms. Every lover was, at first, graciously received, and his hopes flattered, but each in his turn was dismissed, for no suitor of sufficient importance had hitherto presented himself. Foremost among those whom Grimhilda was anxious to lead captive in her fetters were Ezzel * and Die-

* The old German name of Attila.

trich of Bern*, both of whom were then in the meridian of their glory. The former of these, had indeed, long passed the age, when he might be supposed capable of inspiring a tender passion; yet, the reputation attached to such a conquest overcame, in Grimhilda's estimation, all other objections.

Accident at length sent hither two strangers, whose arrival Grimhilda considered as exceedingly favourable to her views, although, in other respects, they had nothing to recommend them. These were the brother-in-law of Ezzel, and Hawart the Dane, the bosom friend of Dietrich. As it was her custom not to make any secret of the number and the names of those whom she held captive in this her enchanted domain; but, on the contrary, publicly to affix up their titles on the boundaries of this territory, as trophies of her victories, Grimhilda was aware that neither the king of the Huns, nor Dietrich would long remain ignorant of the fate that had befallen

* Theodorich of Verona, afterwards king of the Ostrogoths.

their friends, and would therefore, notwithstanding the risk attached to it, be induced to attempt their rescue.

In these expectations she was not disappointed. Both warriors were impatient to liberate their friends from this infatuating jeopardy; although they pursued different means. Dietrich was too cautious to venture rashly in an attempt where he was aware that personal courage would avail him nothing. Ezzel, on the contrary, not doubting but that every thing, even the power of enchantment, and sorcery must yield to his invincible prowess, and flattering himself that even his age would prove a sufficient security against whatever allurements and seductions might present themselves—proceeded less warily. He set out towards the fatal valley, determined that nothing should resist his entrance, and was not a little surprised to find that both ingress and egress were apparently equally easy. Without hesitating, therefore, to make a moment's reflection, he advanced at once, and experienced the same fate as all who had preceded him.

The purpose for which he had proceeded hither, and all sense of the seductive dangers which might await him, were instantly forgotten as he passed the fatal boundary. He was now sensible of nothing, but of the power of Grimhilda's charms; nor was it long before he urged her to become the partner of his crown, stipulating only, that she should forthwith, liberate all those whom she then held captive within her enchanted garden, a condition with which she failed not to comply; except, as far as regarded Hawart of Denmark, whom she had her particular reasons for desiring still to retain as her prisoner.

After their marriage, Ezzel persuaded his consort to quit the Forben valley, and go to reside with him at a castle which he had lately built, and which he named, after himself, the Ezzelburg. Grimhilda now exerted all her influence to induce him both to attempt to recover the Nibelungen hoard, and to take vengeance on her brothers. With respect to the first, Ezzel protested that he had never heard speak of it, and that he conjectured it to be a mere chimera,

adding, that he was now too old to be misled by any such visionary schemes; while, as to the other subject, he declared that he was well pleased to find himself allied to such valorous and brave champions as Gundachar, and her other brothers.

Perceiving that she should not be able to prevail on him to vindicate the injurious suspicions wherewith her character had been aspersed by her brothers, she said: "Well, my lord, since you deem my brothers not unworthy your friendship, it is my wish that a reconciliation should take place between us all: invite, them, therefore, hither in token of amity, that all our feuds may be forgotten."

Ezzel was by no means disinclined to follow this counsel, so he proclaimed a grand tourney, to which he invited the princes of all the courts of Europe; and, at the same time, sent especial messengers to Gundachar and his brothers, to bid them to the festival, charging them say, that it was made more particularly for the purpose of shewing them honour.

So courteous an invitation was not rejected

by the Burgundian princes, who forthwith set out for the court of Ezzel, accompanied by Hagen, Danckwart, and Volker. The latter, indeed, entertained certain suspicions, not altogether favourable to Ezzel and his queen; nevertheless they forbore to hint them to Gundachar, reserving all mention of them till some fitter opportunity. In their road thither they passed the castle of Rudiger, where they stopped, for the purpose of making a visit to that worthy knight. By him they were informed of many circumstances, that had not before reached their ears, respecting the enchantments in the Forben valley, and the magic arts of Grimhilda. This intelligence filled the brothers with disquietude, and, at the same time, increased the suspicions of their companions. Rudiger owned, however, that Grimhilda's conduct had been irreproachable since her marriage, and added that in order to ensure their safety, and provide against any secret attack that might be meditated against them, he himself would accompany them, with a train of five hundred of his followers.

While these events were taking place among the Rhetian Mountains, Grimhilda and her magic arts were the object of anxious solicitude elsewhere. Dietrich of Bern grieved sore for the loss of his friend Haward, the Dane. He had heard that the spells of the Forben valley were now entirely at an end, and that of those who had been detained captive there, by the sorcery of Grimhilda, all had returned home: yet Haward was not yet restored to the eager arms of his friend; neither could he devise any plan whereby he might reasonably hope to achieve his rescue.

There were formerly benevolent spirits as well as evil ones; and it was one of their offices, in all cases of extraordinary doubt and difficulty, to suggest good advice and consolation by the means of dreams. It was doubtless one of these kind of beings, that visited the couch of Dietrich, and presented to him a vision, in order to admonish him how to act.

“Friends,” said he, on the following morning to his companions, “methought that this night I beheld our brother Haward, lying

bound in a gloomy cavern. He stretched out his arms towards me, as if imploring my aid, but a winged serpent, that appeared to watch his dungeon, prevented any attempt on my part to liberate him, for I was unarmed. On a sudden I perceived that I had eleven arrows in my hand: and, at the same time, I heard a voice exclaim to me, proceeding from a rose-bush. "Search for the twelfth arrow, for, that obtained, thou wilt not fail to conquer."

"And didst thou find it?" enquired one of the knights.

"After a long time, I discovered what I sought; yet on trying it, I perceived that it was not like the others, and on my fixing it to my bow-string it broke into pieces."

"Sir knight," replied Hildebrand, the one who had before spoken, "this is a vision that must not be treated slightly. Observe well the advice which it suggests, and you will be certain to prosper in your undertaking. Haward is still fettered by enchantments: the sorceress Grimhilda is the snake that watches him; and you will not fail to overcome her, so soon as

you obtain eleven other knights to join with you in this undertaking. When Haward himself was here there were twelve of us, the exact number required by your dream. At present we need one to complete the mystic number: but we must not choose rashly or at random: we must be careful to select one who will be trusty, even as ourselves, else will he not prove firm like the other arrows, but break as soon as put to the bow, and so cause our defeat."

This interpretation was highly approved by all who heard it; especially by Dietrich, who, to lose no time, immediately set out, attended by his ten comrades, in search of a twelfth companion to fill up their number.

It was not long before they heard of the tourney which had been proclaimed by Hzzel; and they met numbers of knights who were proceeding thither, yet could they not meet with one, who was willing to join them. Hereupon Dietrich began to be sorrowful, and to doubt greatly of the success of his undertaking. They had now nearly approached the Forben valley, when they were accosted by

Irnfried, the margrave of Thuringia, who, as soon as he heard from Dietrich the object of their expedition, said :—"Behind yonder rock, is situated a convent, among the brotherhood of which is one, who, although a monk, is famed for his valour. This must be he who is destined to become your companion. Lose no time, therefore, in seeking him; in his piety you may confide with safety."

Thus directed, they bent their steps towards the convent, where they saw issuing forth from its gates a figure on horseback, and armed, but its helmet was partly concealed by a cowl, while a monk's frock over its armour gave it an appearance singularly grotesque. Instantly conjecturing that this could be no other than the monk whom they been exhorted to seek, Dietrich addressed him, and requested that he would join their troop. Ilzan, for it was he, readily acceded to this entreaty; indeed, he rejoiced exceedingly at the opportunity which thus presented itself of furthering his schemes, and sent privately to Grimhilda to acquaint her

that Dietrich, whom she had so long sought, should soon be conducted into her toils.

The queen, in the meanwhile, on the arrival of her brothers and the other Burgundian knights at her court, proposed to them that they should visit the Forben valley, in order to convince them how much the place had been slandered ; but in reality in hope of there being able to extort from them some confession as to the hoard of the Nibelungen, since she still suspected that they, assisted perhaps by Hagen, or probably having had recourse to necromancy, had contrived to render themselves masters of this treasure. For this purpose she again bestowed on the place its former spells and power of enchantment. No sooner had they passed the magic boundary than they felt the influence of that seductive atmosphere. Dietrich and his companions also, who shortly after arrived thither, conducted by the treacherous Ilzan, did not escape the pernicious contagion. Anxious as he had before been to effect the liberation of his friend Haward, the knight now even forgot that such a one existed on earth.

There was but one friendly voice to warn them of the destruction that awaited them, and this was the same that had formerly counselled Grimhilda to beware how she yielded to error, and the delusion of her own heart. The speaking bush, which had formerly addressed her, had, unknown to her, escaped the destruction which she had intended for it, and still retained its power, in spite of the enchantments of the place.

As Dietrich chanced to pass the bush, then blooming with a hundred flowers, all of most exquisite beauty, a gentle breeze played among its leaves; and instantly a soft murmuring voice was heard to exclaim:—"Hasten to pluck the flower of virtue and prudence!"

"What sounds were those?" cried the knight, looking around him, in order to discover whence the voice proceeded. The same words were repeated, and Dietrich was about to obey it, and pluck one of the flowers, when Ilsan came up to him, and, fully aware of the consequences should he do so, dissuaded him from his purpose, by his raillery.

On hearing the monk's advice, Hildebrand, however, one of Dietrich's companions, who was then present, was the more determined to disobey it; for he had never borne any good will towards him. No sooner had he plucked one of the roses than he seemed conscious to himself of the danger to which he and his comrades were exposed; and, while the rest were laughing and wantoning, little recking the enchantment which fettered their understanding, he felt as if suddenly awakened from a dream. He resolved accordingly to be upon his guard, and, if possible, to impress his companions with a sense of the peril which awaited them all in that syren bower of voluptuous enjoyment.

In order, as much as possible, to avert the obstacles that might hence arise to her schemes and to prevent the recurrence of a similar accident, Grimhilda, when informed by Ilsan of what had happened, took such precautions as would prevent all future access to the enchanted bush. This circumstance induced her too to accelerate her plans, ere they should be inopportunately discovered and prevented.

Dietrich was already so deeply fascinated that there was little fear of his disobedience to aught that she might command. Hildebrand, however, lost no time in pointing out to his friend how dangerous was their present situation; reminding him also of the purpose for which they had sought out this place, and bidding him be on his guard against Grimhilda's perfidy.

"Deem not," said he, "that this woman loves thee. It is her sorcery that besots thee thus; and causes thee to credit what is farthest from the truth."

These and similar exhortations availed but little with the enamoured knight, who, blinded by passion, was so imprudent as to acquaint Grimhilda with Hildebrand's suspicions. This served but to convince her of the necessity of accomplishing her views at once, without further delay. For this purpose, when they next all assembled at their daily banquet, the queen, suddenly arose, and with great vehemence accused Hagen as the murderer of her former husband, Fradolfo, and taxed him also with

having robbed her of the hoard of the Nibelungen.

The former of these charges, he did not attempt to deny, but the latter he called upon her to prove. The order of the feast was now suddenly marred; for the knights sided, some with Hagen, others with Grimhilda. But Hildebrand was not present at this scene of discord, for eager to accomplish the object which had brought them hither; and aware that Dietrich would not now be induced to undertake the execution of it himself, he had proceeded to seek out the captive Haward, whom he at length discovered imprisoned within a tower in a remote part of the garden. This task was not to be accomplished without some difficulty: serpents guarded the entrance of this prison, and these he was obliged to slay before he could obtain access. There were, moreover, horrible gigantic forms armed with enormous maces, and threatening to crush at once whoever should approach; nor was it altogether without apprehension, that the bold knight could regard these terrific shapes. On advancing, however, he found that his prowess

was not likely to be tasked beyond its might, since these monsters were only unsubstantial shapes created by the illusory magic of Grimhilda :—her power could accomplish no more.

Having restored the knight to liberty, they proceeded together towards the banqueting hall, where they found that a violent scene of contention and bloodshed had taken place. Many of the knights had already fallen on both sides ; but Grimhilda stood looking on the horrid spectacle with a savage joy, rather than with any feelings of terror. It seemed as if every victim that fell, afforded a terrible satisfaction to her soul. Instead of attempting to appease the discord which she had created, she encouraged it by all her arts. No sooner, however, did she behold the Dane and his liberator enter the hall, than she uttered a shriek of wild terror, exclaiming that she was betrayed, and that her enemies were aided by power superior to her own. Determined to make a desperate effort, she snatched up a weapon, intending to plunge it in Haward's bosom. The shield of his friend averted the

deadly blow; and, in another moment, Grimhilda herself was weltering in her blood, having received a mortal wound from the hand of Hildebrand.

No sooner had the enchantress expired than the effect of her spells ceased. The gardens lost all those fascinations, which they had derived from magic alone. The sanguinary affray, too, as instantly ceased, for all now perceived that they were contending with friends. There remained, however, one victim whose blood they hastened to shed, to appease the manes of their slain companions: this was Ilsan, the monk, whom they regarded as the accomplice of Grimhilda's sorceries.

Such was the substance of the tale, related by the sentinel to his companion. He then proposed to the latter that they should explore the cavern, in the hopes of finding the hoard of the Nibelungen; for it was still reported, by the neighbouring peasantry, that it was to

that that the spectre monk paid his nightly visits.

Be that as it may, the soldiers never revealed to any one what they met with in that subterraneous region ; but shortly afterwards quitted the service, and having left that part of the country, went to reside in a distant province, where they lived like persons of opulence, and their descendants became allied to the noblest families of the district.

THE
ERL-KING'S
DAUGHTER.

ON the eastern coast of the Island of Zealand there formerly stood an extensive and populous city of which nothing now remains, except a few scattered ruins ; but these, while they attest the magnitude and splendour of this once flourishing spot, preserve no traces of the name which it bore ; and, indeed, of its history, only one fact remains on record of which it is proposed, in the following pages, to offer some account. But as every thing which professes to have “ a local habitation ” must also have “ a name ”, we shall bestow upon it that appellation which the island then bore and still bears, and leave it to the reader’s own free will to fix upon the precise situation of the town, when

he shall have compared all the minor geographical details which the history itself contains.

The merchants of Zealand at that time were the most wealthy and enterprising of mankind. The ocean paid them the tribute of her riches, and their commerce extended over the face of the habitable globe. - Among these Henry von Roskild surpassed all his countrymen and contemporaries in the extent of his mercantile transactions, in the wealth, dignity and honours acquired by a life of twenty years incessant application.

Henry had an only son named Holm, who, far from rearing in a life of indolent expectation as the certain inheritor of a vast and inexhaustible fortune, he had early trained to all the duties of active employment, and instructed in every detail of his own extensive and laborious concerns.

On a neighbouring Island, known even to the present day by the name of Erl-Island, and of which Henry had purchased the exclusive property, he had erected a capacious warehouse, in which were deposited the greater portion of his most costly articles of merchandize. The appro-

priation of this spot to such a purpose had excited surprize among the inhabitants of Zealand ; for, though covered with verdure and the most luxuriant vegetation, not a creature had ever resided on it ; and it was open on every side to the descent of those piratical bands which, at that time, infested the north with constant and terrific visitations.

But exposed and defenceless as it was, no hostile bark had been known to approach its shores ; no marauders were tempted to invade the stores committed to its custody ; the spot appeared to be considered as sacred ground, and no profane intruder was publicly known to trespass on it.

Holm frequently visited it in the execution of his duty, and it soon became a favorite retreat. One day, having landed from his boat, in company with a servant whom he had brought to assist him in his labour, he had scarcely advanced a few steps from the beach when he found a dead body lying before him. He was greatly surprised at such an appearance ; for though he had often seen on different parts of

the island traces of human footsteps and indications of human visits, yet he had never personally met with a stranger, or been able to ascertain that any one had been seen to approach, or retire from its shores. On nearer inspection, the corpse exhibited signs of violent death, and the youthful feelings of Holm were moved to pay an involuntary tribute of commiseration to the remains of the murdered stranger, by bursting into tears.

This mournful duty was, however, interrupted by a summons to perform the object for which he had been sent, and Holm proceeded with his companion to the business of the island. The whole day was spent in the execution of this employment and, in the evening, as they were about to join their boat, the young man's thoughts were again recalled to the lifeless body on the beach. "What a disgrace and even cruelty," said he to his companion, "to suffer the remains of a human being thus to lie corrupting in the sun, when the labour of a few minutes might commit it to its parent earth ! Let us stop and dig a grave for this unhappy son of mortality !"

“Sir,” replied the servant, “if my advice is to prevail I should say, let us by no means interfere with things that do not concern us; the night approaches, and we have only time enough to regain our boat”. Holm paid a painful obedience to the old man’s advice; but, as they pushed off from the shore, he could not but feel desirous of knowing the cause of this apparently harsh injunction, and he accordingly enquired his companion’s motives for refusing this last act of kindness to the departed stranger. “Sir,” replied the latter, “with your youth and inexperience it is natural to feel a wish of conferring benefits without looking to consequences. —I am far from begrudging a handfull of earth, the last sad portion of us all, to any of my fellow men, but there was something too suspicious in the appearance of that body to make me feel a desire of having any thing to do with it. For, though you perhaps are ignorant of it, there is a race of spirits who dwell around us; who wear the same external form as we do, and who can only be distinguished from us by a few mysterious marks. But they are only our half bre-

thren. They are infinitely more powerful than we are, and, for the most part, of an evil disposition: and, among the peculiarities which mark their character this is one, that, like ourselves they are subject to the same power of death, but if their lifeless remains shall be committed to the earth, or plunged to the bottom of the sea previous to the usual inroads of corruption, they then become reanimated, and renew their former course, which may last for many centuries. Whether this body belongs to the class of beings I have described is more than I can tell. My only object has been to prevent you from interfering with it; lest you might meet the same fate that befell the fisherman."

Holm enquired what had been the fisherman's lot, and received in answer a tale something similar to the Arabian story of a spirit, who requited with reproaches and threats his deliverer from the brazen kettle.

Holm had either heard this story, as often as most of our readers, or was, on the whole perhaps, no friend to such narratives. It is very clear he paid no attention to it, and even

scorned the moral it inculcates : that we are to abstain from doing good to those with whom we are not acquainted lest we meet with an ungrateful return.

By whatever motive he was actuated, whether a desire of exercising the common duties of humanity, curiosity, or that youthful stubbornness of spirit which is ever inclined to indulge in what is forbidden, he now resolved to return to the island at the first opportunity, and to bestow upon the body, which had so strongly excited his commiseration, the only kindness in his power—the rites of interment.

The following day enabled him to gratify his wishes. He pretended business on the island, and his usual companion being detained by sudden indisposition, he proceeded alone. The necessary implements were laid in the boat, and, as he was unable to raise a more costly monument to the memory of the departed, a small rose tree was also deposited there, to be planted upon the grave of the unfortunate slain.

He reached the opposite shore amid a variety of conflicting feelings, but the awful solitude of

the spot which, in many an other, would have excited dread, only filled him with a more serious and solemn conviction of the duty he was about to undertake ; and being of an age when all our labours are made a source of enjoyment, which teaches us to discover flowers amid the gloom of a sepulchral waste, these feelings were connected with some sensations of pleasure.

It was no light task our youthful adventurer had imposed upon himself. He had but just entered his thirteenth year ; his arm was still feeble and moreover unpracticed in such labour ; but still the difficult labour was at length brought to an end. Beneath the shade of a lofty groupe of those sacred trees from whom this island received its name, the body was laid to repose, and the friendly agent which had consigned it thither now departed, bestowing that valedictory blessing which every nation has connected to its own use in its own dialect : *Sit tibi terra levis!* This pious wish might here be literally fulfilled, for the earth which covered the body was scarcely two feet deep ; the

juvenile strength of Holm had been too early exhausted to give the grave its proper depth.

The young man had now completed this project of an infantile fancy, or perhaps of a benevolent disposition, and having returned home, he thought no more of the affair. On the third night, however, it was manifested that the obligation had not been forgotten by the party upon whom it was conferred. Holm lay sleeping on his bed when he found himself roused by a hand gently moving him. He started up and perceived before him a figure not wholly unknown, though his imagination was unable, at that moment, to fix its identity. A momentary terror seized him which soon subsided into more agreeable sensations.

“Oh thou,” exclaimed the phantom, in a tone of solemn thankfulness, “who with a few light sods of earth hast shewn me a kindness for which even kingdoms would be but an inadequate compensation, how shall I reward thee?”

What can reward the youth still hanging on the borders of childhood's years, who knows no enjoyment in his yet untutored mind, except the delight occasioned by agreeable visions?

“ Take that which alone can enchant thee now, and rely upon better things hereafter. Fail not to visit Erl-Island by night at the full of the moon, and gaze upon the most beautiful sight thy eyes ever beheld.”

Holm was too thoughtless to pay much attention to this dream, and might even have forgotten it, or refused obedience to its command, had not chance contributed to force it upon his recollection.

At that time the fisheries on the coast of Zealand formed a most important source of wealth to its inhabitants. Both rich and poor, reaped their harvest from the liberality of the ocean, which, at certain periods of the year, was brought them from the distant north. But that which served the needy as the season of earning their scanty annual pittance, was appropriated by the wealthy to joy and public festivity.

Many of the latter had country-houses situated beside the sea, where, on such occasions, they assembled their numerous friends and dependants, and having spent the day in the common amusements of the age, the night was

devoted to securing the bounty of the ocean, which was observed to reach its acme towards the full of the moon.

Holm's father, Henry von Roskild, who was foremost in every thing connected with wealth and display, also distinguished himself at these seasons ; and the festival of the fishery was celebrated by him with a splendour which was seen in his house alone. The happy time being arrived, he prepared a feast, which might have rivaled the magnificence of a royal household, little thinking that this day was to deprive him of that which he held dearest on earth. But it stood written in the book of fate: that when Henry's son Holm, should see for the thirteenth time, the ocean covered with the silver tribes of the north, a watery grave must be his lot; unless some supernatural power should check the wheel of destiny, and reserve for mortal existence, the prize which the immortal powers would gladly transplant to their own sphere.

With all the fire of youth which seizes on every pleasure with avidity, and laughs at

danger, where a prospect of two-fold enjoyment presents itself, Holm had ventured on the night of the festive scene, a considerable distance from the shore, and gave up his boat to the guidance of the breeze, which wafted him still farther from home. While the occupants of the boats behind him and the guests in his father's hall, were emptying the golden bowl to the prosperity of their host and his house, a sudden squall of wind from the unclouded sky, seized the boat which contained the hopes of that noble house, and rapidly bore it beyond the sight of Holm's companions. His absence was unperceived, and his slender bark had long been a prey to the conflicting waves before any enquiry arose, as to the fortune of the adventurous navigator.

Holm must have shared the lot of his boat, and would have sunk in the unfathomable abyss of the waters, had not some superhuman power interfered in his behalf, and, mindful of former benefactions, delivered him from the pressing peril. The young mariner had scarcely touched the surface of the water,

when he felt himself gently raised upon the wings of the breeze, and borne to an adjoining shore, which, though in the first moments of surprize, was totally unknown to him, he soon perceived to be Erl-Island.

As his alarm and agitation subsided, he found himself near the tomb, which, a few months before, he had prepared for the stranger; and the rose tree which had been cherished by unearthly hands, was already in blossom, and offered the welcome tribute of its fragrance to its original planter. But, grateful and reviving as was the odour which surrounded him, it was nothing to the raptures which seized upon his senses as he cast his eyes around, and beheld things which no mortal ever yet gazed upon, who is a stranger to Fairy-land.

The whole island floated in a sea of wondrous light. It was not the light of the moon alone which thus illumined the spot, and whose rays assumed a brighter and more silvery tint than usual: but myriads of luminous insects were seen wandering over bush and

field, and clothing every leaf and shrub with a stream of gentle effulgence. Holm stood for a while lost in contemplation. But, if the light itself, which shone upon this enchanting spot, were so attractive, what can be said of the objects which moved within it. The entire country round was peopled with gliding forms, and aerial beings were seen to float to and fro in rapid succession. The whole youthful host of heaven seemed here collected for mirth and recreation; a soft melodious sound was heard, more like the rustling of insects' wings in regular harmony than any earthly music, to whose tones the delighted band trode through the mazy dance, and, at intervals, retired in ever varying groupes, to wander through the groves and alleys of Erl. It was one of those scenes on which the eye of the fortunate spectator can never satiate its desire of gazing; which the memory may indeed preserve, but which the tongue struggles in vain to describe; for how can mortal tongue unfold the marvels of superhuman things.

Holm had never before felt the exstasies, which at this moment, pervaded his bosom. At length, the magic band collected together into one brilliant groupe; Holm's recollection left him, and he fell asleep. As he awoke, the sun shone in his face; he rose, and walked towards the beach, reflecting on the chance which had brought him thither, on the alarm and anxious distress in which his father must be plunged, on the impossibility of finding subsistence on this uncultivated island; and, notwithstanding the indescribable pleasure he had enjoyed on the preceeding night, heartily wished himself back again, in his own family circle, whose grief, at his supposed loss, he felt, must be overwhelming. This wish however, was perfectly fruitless. He was obliged to remain three days before any hopes of delivery presented itself. During this time he supported life by eating the fruit of a tree, which, in all his former peregrinations through the island, had escaped his notice; and at night his eyes were gratified with the re-appearance of the same heavenly forms which stood before him on his

first arrival. On the second night, however, they were far less brilliant than the first, and on the third, they were hardly distinguishable, for the moon was no longer full, and the decreasing size of this resplendent planet, seemed not only to abstract from the brightness of those unearthly figures, but to change their very nature, and they became little better than indistinct shadows ; so that Holm grew wearied with watching their movements, and began to feel the solitude of the island in all its force.

In the mean time Henry von Roskild lamented over the loss of his son. The day after the festival had made him acquainted with the sad event. Amid the joyful recreations of the evening, Holm had not been missed ; but the discovery of his absence led to an investigation, which only ended in an almost certain conviction that he was gone for ever. The fragments of his boat were found upon the beach, whither they had been cast by the sea, and it required little inhenuity to devine the fate of their youthful owner.

But it is long ere the mind becomes recon-

ciled to the impossibility of recovering a costly treasure suddenly snatched away from us; we search and enquire with restless activity, although reason constantly obtrudes upon us the unwelcome truth, that all research is folly; we at least desire to be held up for a few short moments by hope ere we sink, at once and for ever, into the depths of despondency and despair. Such was the case here. Holm's father felt all the improbability of recovering his son, although his wishes gave a denial to this conviction. There was a possibility that he might have been stranded upon one of the neighbouring islands; every boat was put in requisition for the purpose of making the strictest search; and it is a little extraordinary that Erl-Island should be the last spot visited, where the lonely youth was now spending his fourth day.

The son was now brought back to the arms of his disconsolate father. The joy of their meeting may be better conceived than described. From this day forward Holm became silent and contemplative. He made no com-

munication of the vision he had seen upon the island, but it constantly recurred to his memory. In comparison with the splendour and brilliant tints which he had there seen, every thing around him appeared to be but common-place and insipid. His eyes longed for a renewal of their former bliss; he stood both day and night gazing upon the island,—he even found means to spend a night there, but he saw nothing; till dwelling upon this extraordinary scene and every thing connected with it, his former dream recurred to his recollection, and he then remembered the charge at that time given him, of visiting the island only on the night of the full moon.

Having connected this with the period when he was so miraculously conducted thither, he resolved to await the first opportunity; and, as soon as the moon had attained the fullness of her orb, a boat lay ready in a retired bay, and Holm pulled across in secret to his enchanted island. His expectation was not disappointed; for he passed the night in gazing upon the same objects which had previously enraptured

him, which now seemed the only scene on earth worth beholding, and which, as the morning dawned, he unwillingly quitted to return home.

He would gladly have renewed his visit on the succeeding night; but he knew that the beauty of the spectacle diminished with every change of the moon's phase; he feared his repeated absence might excite suspicion and enquiry, and he resolved to husband his enjoyment by stealing across only once a month.

This plan was pursued for a whole year; and, who can describe his grief when a clouded sky, stormy weather, close observation, or any other impediment deprived him of his wonted happiness.

Young, as he was, he could only think on the pleasure which, in these years, we all derive from looking upon agreeable colours or graceful forms; it never occurred to him that there might be other sources of gratification in such scenes, besides the mere contemplation of them; and if occasionally, as these aerial images passed before him in the dance, the idea struck his

mind, that there must be delight in mingling in their festive circle, a gentle tremor always held him back, and he remained tranquil under his rose-bush beside the grave, and which still continued his favourite spot of observation.

After a time Henry von Roskild found his son to be a mere visionary, who, with increasing years, fulfilled little of that expectation, which his lively, ardent disposition in childhood had promised. Scarcely a single day in the whole month exhibited a trace of his former buoyant spirits ; his activity and diligence, of which such striking marks had been given in earlier times, had yielded to a gloomy, indolent carriage, with which his father was extremely displeased. It was only in the business of the island that he exhibited any portion of his former zeal. This spot he always resorted to with evident satisfaction, though sure of not meeting with the only sight for which existence gave him any pleasure ; but he was at least upon the theatre of those glorious scenes which were celebrated upon every return of the moon to her plenitude. In this

manner he would have mused his whole life through, had he not been forcibly withdrawn from the spot which thus crippled his energies.

At the instigation of his friends, Holm's father resolved upon removing him from Zealand, where every object seemed to afford encouragement to his indolence and visionary speculations. He sent him to Roskild, Henry's native place, which, at that time, was considered the first commercial city in the north, and even maintained a superiority over Zealand itself. King Harold Blaataud, who then swayed the sceptre of Norway, regarded it as the brightest ornament in his diadem, and had contributed very considerably towards increasing its splendour. He resided there for the greatest part of the year, and on the ruins of an ancient castle, which king Rae was said to have inhabited, had built a most magnificent palace, whose equal might have been sought for in vain, in the then habitable globe.

Henry's expectation from the influence of a change of place were not deceived. Holm grieved for a time over his separation from the

enchanted island ; he then sought to distract his thoughts by other amusements, and other objects of less brilliant but more natural attraction ; and, at length, found a temporary substitute in the diversions of Harold's splendid court, and the calls of his father's extensive concerns.

The latter he now pursued with unremitting attention, though he felt no pleasure in the occupation. This continual chase after profit and commercial gain appeared an object beneath his aim ; his bosom panted for higher and more honourable employment. The name of hero, warrior, a nation's deliverer or benefactor were titles which he now aspired to, and an early opportunity of gratifying his desires was not denied him.

The coast of Zealand at that time was very much infested by pirates. Holm's father had suffered considerably during some of their incursions, and a desire of avenging a parent's wrongs now fired the young man's bosom. His wishes were expressed with so much earnestness that Henry became transported with joy on

seeing his son's former love of active pursuits revive, and directed to a course which promised to be productive of wealth. He not only consented to gratify his request, but fitted out a ship, in which no expense was spared to render it equal to the service in which it was to be employed.

Holm had now reached his eighteenth year, his manly stature and daring courage bespoke the warrior born to command, and his early education at home, and frequent voyages to the adjacent coast while at Roskild, had fitted him for the duties of a seaman. His first adventure against the pirates saw him return laden with booty ; his second gained a victory, whose influence was acknowledged in the immediate security of his country's commerce. Shortly after this, several vessels united in an expedition against the principal port frequented by the pirates ; the command of the combined squadron was conferred upon Holm, and the attack was conducted with so much skill, the contest maintained with such daring resolution, and the fruits of the victory so far surpass-

ing all former naval engagements, that the fame of the youthful leader extended to the remotest regions of the north.

Success now followed upon success ; Holm's thirst of fame became insatiate ; his only joy was in the din of arms, and he might thus have consumed his whole life amid the tumult of battle, had not fate conspired, by a single blow, to change his whole career, and check him in his path of glory.

The inhabitants of Greenland on that day spread the same terrors over the northern waters that the Algerines now excite in the southern seas. With one of these vessels, after a long and tedious search, Holm at length fell in ; the fight was obstinately maintained on both sides ; the victory, which declared itself for the Zealanders, was dearly purchased, but the booty promised an ample renumeration. On inspecting the spoil with a view to the customary distribution among his followers, Holm found his principal treasure to consist in what few men are disposed to bestow upon others, without some regard to their own

claim. Two youthful female slaves were brought before the victor, to whom, on another occasion, he might instantly have granted their liberty, with permission to chuse the spot where they would land, but for some reason they were ordered to remain as captives, notwithstanding their request of dismissal. There was, however, something in the manner in which this request was proffered by the fairest of the two, which seemed to imply, that such a wish had only been cordially felt the first time it was urged, and that the second and all subsequent repetitions of it were only made for the sake of decorum.

On the fourth day after the victory, while Holm and his beautiful captive were sitting watching the blue expanse of the water, he turned to her, and said :—"Edda," for such was her name, "if you conceive yourself in bonds of my imposing, you are deceived; from this hour you are as free as the breeze which plays around us. Name the happy land which gave you birth, and my sails shall instantly be directed to it, although it should lie in the azure

sea, which washes the shores of the south. But when you are returned to those who love you, to those who share your affections, when these eyes no longer behold you, what will become of *me*? Only tell me who you are, who thus could gain my heart at what appears a first interview. Who thus could exercise a power over my soul, which assures me we do not meet for the first time, that we have seen each other before."

Edda made no reply to this address, except by calling up the tears to her large blue eyes; but seeing this ambiguous answer only perplexed her lover, she said:—"Whether we have met before, or whether I see you now for the first time, is more than I can venture to assert; but I will frankly own to you, my captivity has been a pleasing bond, that our separation will cost me pain. Nay more, I would willingly prolong my stay, if I knew this could be done consistently with things, of which I have a knowledge, though you have none. But who will win my thanks by solving these doubts!"

"Your doubts," rejoined Holm, "might be

speedily removed. Without question they only rest upon the very natural fear of incurring a parent's displeasure at thus becoming mine without permission. Let us hasten to your home,—Holm of Zealand need not fear a refusal from the most distinguished of Scandinavia's princes."

"Oh! no, no," exclaimed the damsel, "will you thus coldly deliver me up to a power from whom you can never retrieve me?"

Holm interpreted this into an unconditional assent, and the ceremonies of those times being widely different from the present, the nuptials were instantly celebrated. Holm led his blushing bride to the prow of the ship, and, in the face of heaven and the fading glory of the setting sun, now sinking into the western main, swore eternal fidelity to his Edda. Thulis, the bride's companion, and Holm's faithful followers were the witnesses of the compact, the former maintaining a serious and silent expression of regret, while the latter filled the air with loud acclamations to the happiness of the newly-married pair.

"Oh! Edda, what have you done?" said Thulis to her friend, the first moment which found them alone. "Is this a connexion worthy of your illustrious descent? and how will you be able to justify the deed to that severe and scrupulous judge, so well known to us both, and who must eventually learn the fact?"

"Hush! hush," exclaimed Edda, "I implore you; lest some wandering spirit catch the sound, and bear him the tidings of an event which he cannot learn too late: what love has done, love must teach me to defend."

"Oh Edda!" rejoined her companion, "you who aspired so high, who might have chosen between the thrones of Scandinavia or Mona's sacred isles, to what are you reduced?"

It was not envy that roused the fair stranger to this remonstrance with her friend, but a sincere attachment to her welfare and interest. A further discussion only produced a unity of opinion, as to the merits of the youthful warrior, with whom Edda had connected her destinies, and the generous Thulis resolved to share the fortunes of her friend, by re-

maining with her through every chance of weal or woe.

Holm knew nothing of what was passing in the councils of the females, and if any part of it had met his ear, he would have found it quite as enigmatical and inexplicable as we are forced to leave it for the present. He felt all the joy of possessing in his newly acquired bride, the most beautiful and attractive form his eyes had ever beheld, without a single drawback on his happiness, and though his bark had borne him far from the coast of Zealand, though impeded by storms, in one of which, the whole booty of the cruize was thrown overboard; yet the hours passed rapidly on, and his present voyage seemed scarcely of longer duration than one of his former excursions to Erl Island.

The recollection of this spot now incessantly reverted to his imagination. What had formerly floated before his juvenile mind, in obscure and in distinct imagery, appeared to be realized, and brought home to him in the presence of his Edda. How his lovely bride and this enchanted island could be connected, was

a mystery, upon which he never allowed himself to reason, but his imagination willingly united them as two kindred subjects, whose influence over his soul, seemed to spring from a similar source, and whose sway was equally extensive and irresistible. It might be, that Edda inclined a more willing ear to all he said relative to this enchanting spot, than any one else had deigned to vouchsafe; for all his previous hints on the subject, had only been met with scorn and derision by his companions, as the fancies of a disordered brain; but Edda eagerly listened to his recital, and entered into all his enthusiastic admiration, and love of the sacred island.

The marriage contract between Holm and Edda had been coupled with few stipulations. There was, however, one which the bride had proposed on the day of their marriage, with a solemnity of manner, and urged with an earnestness of persuasion, that however disagreeable to her admiring bridegroom, could not be refused to her supplications. "The day," said she, "which first saw me condemned to slavery, and

from which you have rescued me, will be an ever memorable æra in the story of my life. I have, therefore, resolved to observe it by devoting myself to fasting and prayer, the eight and twentieth day of every moon. Four and twenty hours before and as many after this period, I must remain invisible to you ; I shall secret myself in my chamber, and will put your love to the test, by enjoining that you make no attempt to disturb my solitude." This singular stipulation, Holm had consented to, though it threatened to deprive him of Edda's society, nearly a twelfth part of the whole year.

Their confinement at length drew to a close, and Holm perceived the dusky cliffs of his native shores. During the voyage he had assured his wife of the attachment borne him by his countrymen, of his father's tender regard for him, and the consequent warm reception which she might expect from each.

In the first of these he was not wholly disappointed. The news of his arrival after so long an absence, brought a multitude to the beach, to hail his return, and to inspect the

booty, which in all his previous cruizes, had been the reward of his enterprize, and who came not without a hope of sharing that liberality for which the youthful commander was so distinguished. But, when they learned the true state of the case, when they saw his dismantled ship, which had suffered much from storms, when they heard the whole of the booty acquired, had been thrown overboard to lighten the vessel, and save the lives of the crew ; their joy became quickly modified, their tumultuous approbation wholly subsided, and instead of attending as on former occasions, their gallant defender to his father's house, they permitted him to seek his paternal dwelling alone, and only accompanied by his Edda and her companion Thulis.

If Holm's reception by the people was cold and disheartening, his father's conduct was infinitely more surprising and painful. He first complained that the successful hero of former voyages, had brought home *nothing*, and then heightened the keenness of the reproach, by declaring he had brought *too much*. It was in

vain that the young man dwelt upon the charms and accomplishments of his bride. The avaricious heart of Henry was deaf to such representations. He only regarded the poverty of array in which she had arrived, which had been heightened by the length of the voyage, and her previous captivity; and was wholly insensible to personal beauty, when cloathed in mean attire. Holm's declaration to his mistress when preferring his love, that he need fear no refusal from the most distinguished of Scandinavia's princes, was a truth doubly felt by Henry von Roskild: and this son on whom he had founded every hope of aggrandizing his house, had now cast himself away upon a slave and a beggar.

These were the names Henry bestowed upon the lovely Edda, when alone with his son. Courtesy forbade a repetition of them in her presence, and, in addition to this, there was a dignity of deportment in the fair stranger which inspired a restraint upon his feelings, and excited awe in his breast, though no attachment.

Holm was exceedingly grieved at thus in-

curing his father's displeasure, but no entreaties could prevail upon him to abandon his Edda. To her this cold reception, and continued indifference, was a source of painful regret, but she concealed her feelings from her husband. A small house on the sea shore was now allotted them, where they retired to conduct their household on those principles of economy, which their circumstances required. Edda permitted nothing to come amiss, she resigned herself with admirable patience, to this sad change in her fortune, and bore all her privations with exemplary fortitude. Thulis wept in the retirement of her own apartment, but forbore to oppress her friend by reproaches. Holm alone remained full of hope, and with undaunted firmness. "My circumstances," said he to himself, "must change. My father cannot continue thus displeased with me for ever; a single enterprize at sea may retrieve my fortunes, and while I relieve my Edda from the poverty which now besets her, I may recover the affection of my fellow-countrymen; and the attachment of my father."

These expectations, however, were not ful-

filled. It is true, he collected the remains of his shattered fortunes, to fit out his vessel, he proceeded to sea, and was engaged in several affairs with the pirates, but he always returned the vanquished party, and booty was of course, out of the question.

Love and esteem are the never failing attendants of success; the latter had wholly abandoned him, and it was but in obedience to the natural course of events, that the former had also quitted him. The people looked with indifference on the necessities of their former preserver; and the heart of Henry seemed daily to grow more obdurate. Neither the sufferings of Holm, the beauty of Edda, or the smiles of a grandson, which she now placed in his arms, could excite feelings of affection in a bosom which appeared to thirst alone for wealth and grandeur.

During these times of distress and privation, Edda was allowed to pass her days of prayer and fasting without censure and without opposition. Holm willingly granted her the uninterrupted occupation of her chamber, that

he too in his own might have the free indulgence of his sorrows, which in her presence he felt compelled to restrain.

The obdurate father now chose to make the sufferings of his son a means of exacting consent to those plans which his own ambition had-framed. A band of spies was placed round the humble roof of Holm, whose duty consisted in reporting every thing that transpired beneath it. The periodical observances of Edda were now made the ground work of open calumny. "Why does Holm," said one of these lurking wretches, under the mask of friendship, "why does Holm endure the yoke of poverty, and a father's just indignation, for a woman wholly unworthy of the sacrifice? Who is Edda, that her husband should call down on himself inevitable misery and ruin, merely to preserve her love? Has she ever communicated to him the story of her birth and parentage? Can he boast of the smallest token of confidence from this practised dissembler? What is her occupation during those days and nights of secret retirement? She fasts and prays? A mere idle

story! Let Holm but once obtrude upon her solitude and he will discover another kind of tale."

It is impossible to say how far these practices with time and constant repetition might have gained upon the young man's better judgment; he might have fallen into the insidious snare, had not a friendly hand warded off the evil.

The faithful Thulis perceived the gathering storm and informed her friend of it. "Edda," said she, "some evil genius is at work to separate you and your husband for ever. I know you cannot, I know you dare not pardon any attempt to fathom your secret, and yet he has already stretched forth his hand to remove the sacred veil that covers it. I avoid his presence on account of the strange enquiries with which he always meets me. These daring questions will be followed by deeds of equal boldness, unless your ingenuity supply some means of averting them."

Edda became lost in thought.—"Well!" she exclaimed, after a considerable pause, "let

the die be cast, while I have so long struggled to retard. It is better to solve the mystery at a time when Holm is still worthy of deriving advantage from its knowledge ; it is better to close the evil condition in which we are, ere our mutual patience be exhausted, than to delay it a moment longer. I feel indeed courage within me, on Holm's account to endure for many years all, and even more, than has hitherto befallen us : I even triumph in the consciousness of the sacrifices I hereby make ; but has *he* resolution and strength to endure equally with me ? And what have you done, my beloved Thulis, to deserve this long participation in my misery ?”

A discussion now arose as to the best mode of carrying their intentions into effect ; but upon which they found some difficulty of agreement, when Holm, the following morning, made a proposal that rendered further proceedings unnecessary.

This truly kind and devoted husband, who was far from committing the breach of his nuptial promise, the prudent fears of Thulis had

imagined, thus addressed his wife :—"Edda," said he, "I can no longer support the thought of knowing you thus poor and wretched ; these arms must change your destiny. If we cannot succeed in the way most natural to our wishes, some other ought to be attempted. I have formed a plan, which, in a few days, I shall proceed to sea for the purpose of putting in execution."

"What!" said Edda, in a tone bordering on pointed raillery ; "can Holm resolve to leave his wife, her own mistress for weeks and months, of whose virtue he is hardly assured when locked in a solitary chamber?"

"Listen to my intentions," rejoined Holm who either understood her not, or resolved not to understand her. "All I possess, except you, is yonder bark : my poverty prevents me from equipping her with either arms or men, sufficient to renew my former expeditions against the pirates, and, in addition to this, my evil star is against me in such undertakings. My present resolve is, to enter into the service of some powerful sovereign. The name of Holm of

Zealand is sufficiently notorious to ensure me a favourable reception and liberal pay: this will be enough for our present wants; for the future, my sword must be my safeguard; the powers above will one day regard me with a more favourable disposition, and endow my arm with its ancient power. Pray for me, thou pious suppliant, pray, during my absence, that thy Holm may again become the terror of his country's foes."

Edda was moved to tears by this address; how could she entertain against such a man either suspicion or anger? Was not every word he uttered a denial of her alarms?

"My dearest husband," she replied, while her lovely countenance resumed all its wonted expression of affection, "may your Edda venture to enquire what sovereign is to be so fortunate as to retain in his service Holm of Zealand? Not the King of Scandinavia? Oh avoid the sanguinary warrior's court who reserves to himself the honour, fame, and spoil of war, and awards his followers only scars and death."

“ And to whom else should my aid be proffered ?” enquired Holm ; “ the king of the northern realms has surely the first claim upon my services.”

“ There are other northern princes, my dearest husband ; have you not heard of the venerable King of Thule, a prince of infinite wisdom, valour, and generosity ; worthy to fill the proudest throne on earth ; but who yet remains contented with the rugged barren mountains of his native soil.”

Holm was surprized at the warmth with which his wife spoke of this distant prince, whose name had hardly reached the Baltic shores ; for the fame of peaceful sovereigns seldom extends beyond the boundaries of their dominion. Edda gave him to understand that she had heard much of the King of Thule during her stay with the Greenland pirates, and added so many honourable testimonies of his character, that Holm became equally struck with his worth, and vowed his sword should be devoted to no one else.

Finding her husband thus resolved, she continued: "In the country which gave me birth, another Zealand like yours, the people place considerable importance on having a fortunate symbol at the stern of the vessel. I hold it for undeniable, that yours has been of an opposite character, and hence the cause of your recent unsuccess. Let me beg of you this time to remove the odious monster which now disfigures the stern of your ship, and place in its stead, portraits of me, my boy, and my friend Thulis. Rely upon it, the charm will operate, and I shall secure your eternal gratitude."

This singular fancy was assented to with a smile, and Holm's father, who had his own private reasons for wishing his son's absence from Zealand, now offered his aid in expediting the vessel, which was soon ready for sea.

The parting scene, between Holm and his wife, exhibited more tender grief on his side than hers. Edda seemed supported by her happy expectations of the future, and while she gazed upon the cheering hopes which

floated before her in the distance, overlooked the abyss which was ready to yawn beneath her feet.

Henry von Roskild only awaited his son's departure to put his hostile intentions against his daughter-in-law, into execution. The swelling sails were scarcely lost in the horizon, before the inhuman father ordered the unoffending Edda, her child and friend, to be placed in a boat, charged with a scanty stock of provision, and the whole to be transported to Erl-Island, until he should make up his mind as to their further destiny.

This proceeding did not pass unobserved by all the inhabitants of Zealand; there were many who bestowed their commiseration upon Holm's defenceless wife, and who formed no favourable surmises as to Henry's ultimate intentions. She, however, only smiled and endeavoured to move the lovely Thulis, who seemed less disposed to mirth, to share in her joy. "Do but observe," she said in an under voice, "how kindly fortune treats us: it seems as if she

herself had prompted to our foe, the spot chosen for our banishment."

While these things were passing at home, Holm's vessel pursued her course over the trackless ocean, and soon reached the vicinity of her destined port. At that time the Northern Atlantic was rendered extremely insecure by the piracies of the celebrated Naddock, who directed his attacks against the subjects of the peaceful king of Thule, and it would be difficult to say, how far this powerful rover might have prevailed, had not a happier destiny sent a deliverer to the inhabitants of the frozen isle.

We do not wish to be asked how the hero of Zealand, with a single ship, could possibly gain a victory over this powerful opponent; for, if we were, we could only reply that the early history of the north abounds with such incredible events. It is enough that Holm did gain a victory, at least so far, as to compel the inveterate foe of Thule to retire from its waters, and seek a refuge in the Island

of Atlantis, from whence he was one day to return with recruited forces and redoubled terrors.

It was by no means a part of Holm's plan to pursue the enemy; he left him in full possession of that golden bridge, which is said to stand prepared for every flying adversary, and directed his course to the capital of Thule, where the news of his atchievement had preceded his arrival. Filled with joy at the certainty of deliverance from Naddock's dreaded attack, and grateful to the heroic stranger who had effected it; the inhabitants pressed to greet him as he landed on the shores, and proffered a more substantial reward in return for his important services. But the victory over Naddock had not been without its booty, which enabled him to decline their offer, while this unexpected trait of magnanimity tended materially to enhance his reputation. The aged monarch of Thule was delighted with Holm's atchievement, his noble conduct and heroic stature, and when he modestly asked permission to enter into his service, the venerable prince

declared with emotion, that he would rather have made him his son than an officer of his court.

The good old practice of the North was then in full observance, which unites with all public rejoicings, the festive enjoyments of the table. Holm was now invited to a succession of splendid entertainments, and after repeated visits to the royal palace, conceiving that decency required some return on his part, solicited the king and his court to honour him by partaking of a seaman's fare on board his ship. The invitation was accepted, and the delicacies of the marine entertainment were in no way inferior to those of the royal table.

After the guests had been regaled at a board plentifully supplied, and had united in commending the wines, found among the booty of the recent engagement, the king felt a desire of examining more minutely Holm's ship, which, as the workmanship of a nation, wholly strangers to him, contained a variety of contrivances that excited his surprize and curiosity. The wish was no sooner uttered than complied

with; Holm led his guests over every part of his floating dwelling, and, having exhausted the marvels of her interior structure, proposed a view of her external arrangements from the water. A boat was lowered, and the royal party was conducted round the ship, to gaze upon the trim, yet efficient disposition of her rigging, and the bird-like form of her hull. On reaching the stern the figures depicted on it, immediately caught the attention of all; and the aged monarch, overpowered by surprize, uttered a shriek of apparent dismay. His courtiers, who shared his astonishment, and seemed perfectly aware of the cause, maintained a respectful silence; but Holm, who read in the countenance of all a sudden change of feeling, which he interpreted to his own disadvantage, applied to the king for an explanation of this mysterious conduct. The monarch only pressed his hand, in assurance of his continued esteem, and begged to be transported home, whither he requested Holm would follow.

On reaching his palace, and having dis-

missed his attendants, he turned to the wondering Zealander, and said in a voice still struggling to suppress the emotion of his bosom :—
“ Tell me, Holm, the real purpose which has brought you to my shores ?”

“ A desire of fame and honour, a desire of entering into your service, because report had celebrated you as a kind and beneficent master.”

“ Then wherefore have you shewn me the picture which decorates the stern of your vessel ?”

“ I did not shew it ; how could I believe that you would feel any interest in viewing it ? you saw it by the same chance which gave you a sight of every thing else.”

“ Holm ! Holm ! do not thus sport with my feelings ; tell me, I beseech you, all you know of the persons there represented.”

“ I know no more of their history than briefly this, that they represent my wife, her friend, and my son.”

“ Heavenly powers ! your wife ! your son ! Ought I to mourn or ought I to rejoice ? Joy !

joy ! be to me and mine, for heaven has endowed you with a princely heart, has gathered round your name a princely fame by your heroic deeds."

Holm was at a loss to comprehend the old king's transports, and conceived it best to remain silent in an affair which he did not understand.

"Tell me then," continued the king, "tell me which of these females is your wife?"

"The fairest!"

"The fairest? she who stands leaning on her friend?"

"No! she on whose knees the child is seated."

At this declaration the king's countenance became changed again to an uncertain expression of either increased or diminished joy, as Holm might choose to interpret it. After a pause, he affectionately seized the young man's hand, and said:—"Holm, you are not so nearly allied to me as I expected, yet sufficiently near for me to salute you by that endearing appellation, which I formerly ex-

pressed a wish to confer on you. It is now more than a year since my daughter and my niece were torn from me by pirates; to you I shall owe their restoration. Thulis is my child, your Edda but the daughter of the Erl-King, yet still a princess, of whose possession you may be proud, if you know how to maintain your claim."

"To maintain it," exclaimed Holm; "maintain possession of my Edda? for that my sword shall be my security. Besides, my son will be another and a sufficient pledge; for how can a mother be separated from her husband, without entailing disgrace both on her and her offspring."

"In that," rejoined the king, "you have seized the subject by its right side; your son may be the bond which will assure you possession of your wife. But place no reliance on your sword: you do not know the Erl-King, or you would not speak thus. I might have granted you the hand of my beloved Thulis, and should have joyed in my infant grandson; but the father of the lovely Edda!—however,

do not let your courage sink, and now tell me all that has befallen the unhappy captives, that I may devise the best means of restoring Thulis to my arms, and of assisting you and your wife."

Holm and the aged monarch passed the rest of the day in discussing these important matters, and the father of Thulis made him better acquainted with the Erl-King's family,—a knowledge which only increased his anxiety in proportion as it became more extensive. In return Holm imparted to his royal relative the distress in which he had left Edda and her friend, a communication which led to the resolution of dispatching an embassy on the following morning, for the purpose of conducting home the unhappy princesses.

Holm now proceeded on board his ship to make the necessary preparations for the voyage, incessantly repeating to himself:—"And this it was, thou dearest Edda, for which thou madest me seek the shores of Thule!—This was the fortune which thy image was to secure me from the best of princes!"

On the following morning the ships of Thule which were to accompany Holm, sailed out of the harbour with him ; a favourable wind shortened their voyage, and they reached the coast of Zealand without interruption from storm or pirates. The appearance of this gallant fleet excited surprise in all the inhabitants of this island. Holm's flag was instantly recognized, but who were the strangers ?—and as the embassy now landed, and as the king's name who had dispatched it, and the cause of their arrival became known, joy and astonishment pervaded the faces of some, while others held down their heads in shame and vexation.

Henry von Roskild was scarcely able to cast a look upon his son, as he detailed and endeavoured to justify his inhuman conduct towards the defenceless Edda. But the dutiful Holm used every means to relieve his father's confusion : to soothe the pangs of Henry's agonized conscience, and perfectly happy in knowing all farther persecution must cease, he cast a veil over the past, and persuaded the ambas-

sadors of Thule, that Edda had only been removed to the Erl-Island, for greater security, and in compliance with her own wishes.

A general eagerness now prevailed for visiting the desert island. The patricians of Zealand, with Henry von Roskild at their head, attended the ambassadors in their passage across, all equally desirous of offering their congratulations to the newly discovered princess, and of repairing their former neglect, by the excess of their present adulation.

It is difficult in the moment of success, to repress contempt for those who have grossly injured us in misfortune; but Edda, whose noble nature, soared above vulgar prejudice, received all alike, with marks of pleasing condescension, and thanks for their interest in her welfare. This conduct confirmed in the minds of the ambassadors, Holm's previous assurance; and Henry von Roskild, who had alternatively floated in a sea of fear and joy, at the recollection of his gross barbarity, and the importance to which he should be raised by his alliance with Edda, became wholly resigned to the latter im-

pression. On one point, however, he found his daughter-in-law, inexorable, nothing could prevail upon her to remain a single day longer in Zealand. The desire of being again united to her family, was too powerful to admit of a moment's delay. Henry begged to have his grandson left behind, to console him during their absence; but even this hypocritical request was delicately declined. She immediately went on board, and left her oppressors to the pleasure of their own reflections.

Holm and Edda were overjoyed at meeting again under such circumstances; but nothing could equal the transport of Thulis, at being released from the miseries she had endured for no advantage, for no purpose, of her own; and the joy with which she looked forward to a return to her native land, from whence a feeling of the purest friendship had so long separated her.

One evening as Holm and Edda were seated on the stern of the ship, reflecting on their arrival at Thule, with mingled hopes and fears the latter communicating to her husband cer-

tain circumstances, of her life, of which she perceived he was too considerate to demand an explanation, but concerning which, his curiosity was manifestly written in his looks.

The unclouded sky exhibited a blue expanse of calm serenity; a gentle breeze gave an almost imperceptible motion to the vessel, and the pale and beamless moon was seen rising above the horizon, not in the full rotundity of her orb, but like the taper curve of a silver sickle; a symbol always most favourable to Holm's confidential intercourse with his wife.

“My dearest Holm,” said the gentle Edda, “I see the extreme anxiety you have to ask a solution of many things, of which you possess a natural right to be made acquainted; and, while I acknowledge the delicacy which hitherto has checked your enquiries, let me now make a full disclosure of all you can be desirous of hearing.

“That I am the Erl-King's daughter, is a circumstance that has already been told you by the king of Thule; but, whatever my kind and excellent uncle may think or say, my fa-

ther is not that inconsiderable prince, which his relation is pleased to represent. Happy he, that in his contracted imagination, the frozen isle is of more importance than the boundless realm of the Erl-King, which extends over the face of the whole earth, and is most powerful in those districts, which are unknown to you mortals. I might expatiate upon these mysterious topics for a time, and in a manner beyond your ability to follow me, but for the present, I will only dwell upon what comes immediately home to you. We are a race of spirits, only half allied to mankind; our dominion extends over the desert islands of the ocean, and those places on the earth, where that tree grows which bears our name. We love the human race and willingly enter into connexion, and alliance with it. The majority of the northern kingdoms see seated on their thrones, princesses of our house: a similar destiny awaited me in the crown of Scandinavia, and in this lay my misfortune, and perhaps yet may lie.

“No female creature can be vainer of her beauty and noble birth, than I was; no earthly

being appeared of sufficient worth, to merit the honour of my hand; I would gladly have sought an alliance with the spirits of the air. I knew our race, as well as your own, was subject to the dominion of death; that the boon of immortality was only to be gained by certain observances; these I knew not, for they remain a secret to most of us; but I felt perfectly satisfied that a connexion with the feeble, frail, and ephemeral sons of earth, could not be the way to secure it, and hence arose my contempt for the crown of Scandinavia, which was to be purchased by an union with a mortal hand. I withstood my father's wishes as well as I could; I sought for delay and peace of mind, amid seclusion and retirement; the Erl-King had invested me with the sovereignty of the lonely island opposite the coast of Zealand, and here I lived in the society of my damsels, unobserved by the grosser sight of men, and wholly invisible to them, except upon those brilliant moon-light nights, when we hold our dance. For the substantial form in which we show ourselves, and in which

you now behold me, though the perfect impress of the ethereal form conferred upon us by nature, is but a coarser covering assumed for the purpose of exhibiting ourselves to you.

“ I lived in this tranquil retirement, solely occupied in studying those transcendant means which lead to immortality. I knew that several Erl-princes were seated around me, but I thought little about it ; still less did I think, that any evil would arise from their contiguity: and yet fate had so decreed that the destinies of one should become intimately interwoven with mine; and Heaven only grant that his influence be *now* at an end.

“ The prince of the isle of Mona had heard of my retreat, and came secretly to see me; my beauty charmed his eyes, my exalted rank flattered his pride, and my well known dislike of a mortal union, only served to nourish his hopes. It was not long before his importunities became offensive to me. I sent my father intelligence of my situation, and he, to whom an alliance with one of his vassals,

was equally revolting as to me, hastened to my assistance. He detected the intruder as he hovered around my dwelling, Heaven knows with what intention, in his grosser carnal form. Punishment was instantly inflicted ; and, as the prince of Mona fell beneath my father's hand, he uttered a dying imprecation upon me : ' May thy pride be humbled by a union with the commonest of nature's earthly children, and oh ! that I could live to revenge myself by promoting the degrading bond.'

“ My father considered it best, that I should abandon my island for a time. He carried me to the king of Thule, one of my maternal relations. It was here I first became acquainted with the human race, creatures whom I never before had seen. My heart entered into a bond of warmest friendship, with the lovely Thulis, my uncle's daughter ; we vowed eternal friendship to each other, in all the chances of weal or woe : we have observed the conditions of our vow, and the mutual sacrifices it entailed, have not been few.

“ I became so much attached to my cousin

that I resolved, for her sake, to abandon my solitude. I only visited my favourite island in the full of the moon, from an irresistible necessity of celebrating certain mystic rights in the districts where we rule. Whenever I assumed my light ethereal form for the purpose of floating through the air to the island, my corporeal covering, which, to please my friend, I constantly wore, remained with her as a pledge of my return. During my absence she watched over it with the pious care of a sister, for it is the injury this earthly frame receives, that entails upon us death.

“ I found every thing upon my beloved island much the same as when I quitted it. My damsels, whom I had left behind, had some time before discovered traces of human visits; and they now informed me that these visits were become much more frequent, and that some rash and senseless mortal, had even ventured to pass the night there.

“ At the first celebration of our mysteries, I became convinced of this profane intrusion; I saw the daring offender secreted behind a

rose-bush, observing all our movements; his doom was instantly pronounced, and, at the first approach of dawn, I hastened to the spot that I might execute it upon his impious head. But oh! Holm, how shall I relate what ensued, without creating suspicions which may be injurious to the delicacy of my sex. I saw a youth of exquisite beauty, still bordering on childhood, almost a boy, stretched asleep upon a turf of grass. His countenance beamed with all the freshness of the youth of heaven; innocence and heroic virtue were pourtrayed in all his tender features, the rose-bush under which he slumbered had nearly covered him with the leaves of its flowers, as if desirous of withdrawing him from my sight—perhaps it had been better if my eyes had never beheld him!—my just indignation became disarmed, and I probably felt, in that moment, the first emotions of a passion with which the prince of Mona had cursed me.—I saw the beautiful invader of our rites about to move as if roused from his sleep and I fled with my airy suite, fearful of being perceived. Let him remain unmo-

lest, I said to my followers; he is but a boy; from him, we shall experience neither injury nor profanation.

“ After this, few nights of the full moon passed, in which I did not see the young man seated beside his rose-bush; I even mourned if upon any occasion he were absent; and I anticipated the time of my next departure from Thule and delayed my return. I found cause for commendation in the youthful stranger's modesty which contented itself with gazing, without venturing to join in our festive dance; and a secret wish arose within me, that he might drop his coy reserve and give me an opportunity of becoming acquainted with him.

“ My monthly journeys from Thule to the island had not exceeded a year's duration before the spectator of our nightly orgies entirely forsook us; I no longer saw him seated beneath his rose-bush and the island now became a dreary waste to me—I hastened my return to Thule.

“ What was it Holm which at that time I felt for one who is no stranger to you? it could

not be love? Oh! no, this passion I had to learn at a future period.

“ Years now passed on. The fair boy, whom I no longer saw, might as Thulis thought, have grown into manhood; and live to threaten my heart with far more serious dangers, should fate throw him in my way. My cousin frequently rallied me upon the subject as if it had been a serious passion, and I accepted her raillery as young girls mostly do; we commented upon the adventure, arrayed it in circumstance, laughed at our folly and forgot it.

“ The time, however, arrived when we were to forget this and every other playful occupation under the pressure of misfortune. We had one day visited one of those warm springs which abound in my uncle’s realm, and had amused ourselves with observing the singular productions of nature in these districts. On our return, a beautiful lawn of aromatic grass filled me with a desire of walking on it. It lay close beside the sea and a pirate, whose ship was moored behind a rock, resolved to make us his prey. In this lonely spot, removed from our atten-

dants, our persons were quickly mastered, and before our loss could be known at the court of Thule, we were borne away many miles at sea.

“ We became slaves, slaves of Naddock the most insolent and cruel of all the sons of plunder. He had long entertained designs against the frozen isle, and the possession of the heiress to the throne filled him with more aspiring thoughts. Thulis was now incessantly tormented by his disgusting profession of love; she was his slave, and was to purchase her freedom by the sacrifice of her hand.

“ We suffered much from the cruel persecutions of our proprietors, and, without me, Thulis would probably have been exposed to still greater hardships. But Naddock suspected in me something above a common nature. He had a species of dread of my presence, whose cause I could better comprehend than he did: a single word from me was ever sufficient to scare him back, within the limits of decorum, whenever his passion for my friend might have impelled him to overstep them.—I know not how long this feeling of the presence of a being of a

higher order might have checked the conduct of a wild unprincipled man, but a kinder destiny speedily provided for the termination of our sufferings, and cast us—into your hands. With the rest you, Holm, are sufficiently acquainted. I saw you; my eyes no longer recognized your person, though my heart instantly acknowledged its influence. My previous attachment to the boy on Erl-Island was now transformed into an irresistible affection for the hero of Zealand. My heart, I knew not why, seemed only to beat for you. I became yours and could not devine what had thus impelled the haughty daughter of the Erl-King to the speedy union with a mortal being.

“ You related to me the adventures of your youth, I compared them with my own and every thing became clear to me. We were old acquaintances, whom fate had long decreed to join in mutual love. Heaven only grant that the destiny still hanging to us may be a favorable one. I do not fear the prince of Mona’s imprecation can have any influence here; for I do not love in Holm a mere common mortal, but

the noblest and most exalted of his race. I did not conceive it right to inform you of the connexion between our history, or to tell you that you loved in me a being of a higher sphere: as yet I was not sufficiently acquainted with your worth; it was necessary you should undergo a trial of which, if you had not stood the test, we must have parted for ever.

“ I loved you with an affection which made me dread this separation more than death; and I therefore considered it best, as some doubts arose in my mind with regard to your firmness, to solve the enigma ere my enemies should stir you up to a deed, which it lay not in my own power to forgive. I therefore suggested the voyage to Thule, because I knew its excellent prince would recognize his daughter in the portrait; that every thing else would follow on this discovery; and I also knew that he alone would intercede for us with my father, and that his application might, perchance, be successful. It was on this account that I looked upon your departure with feelings of the most animated hope, little thinking that, at the very

moment I was making this sacrifice, misfortune and misery were preparing for me by the friends of one, for whom I had hazarded a father's love, the throne of Scandinavia, and every hope of immortality.

“I could not fathom the extent of your father's designs against me; whether he sought my death, or intended to sell me as a slave in some distant land; or, what would have been still more overwhelming, to deliver me up to the prince of Mona. For I have not been without suspicions for some time past that my antient persecutor—heaven knows by what chance, is still in existence; and in secret accord with the old merchant of Zealand. He certainly has not resigned all his intentions against me; he wishes to possess either me or my son; thus much stands distinctly before me, the remainder is enveloped in the mist of uncertainty. Holm! Holm, beware! you are but a short sighted child of mortality, and he perhaps may attempt to make your own hand the instrument for carrying his plan into effect.”

Edda said this with strong emotion and, as

she spoke, a few sparks of fire flashed from her eyes, an appearance Holm had never before observed ; and which was far from exciting pleasurable sensations.—He however managed to conceal his dislike and having given her an assurance of his determination to be guarded she continued : “ Happily your father chose a mistaken mean for attaining his end ; in this particular his ally must have misinformed him. He transported me, for security, to my beloved Erl-Island, a spot from whence no power of man or spirit can remove me without my own consent. Thulis knows the joy with which I saluted my antient territory, knows the days of endless pastime which we there passed in the society of my own species. It is a pity that Thulis is but a mere human maiden ; she accommodates herself as entirely to all our habits as if she were one of ourselves, and as such she is beloved by us all.”

“ Our ceremonious removal from Erl-Island you saw ; your father’s pressing entreaty that my son might be left behind you also witnessed ; at this moment the moderation I had so pain-

fully maintained almost forsook me, for I too clearly perceived in this request the malice of the prince of Mona. Once more, Holm, I exhort you beware ! beware lest the machinations of this arch-traitor seduce you to become the instrument of our joint misfortune: an indistinct misgiving floats before me that you have once already fallen into his snares."

Holm felt gratified that the second warning of his wife was pronounced in a softer tone than the first and he promised all she asked. There was nothing of which he felt a stronger conviction than of his fidelity to her, although he could not avoid thinking, that his happiness would have been greater, if his lovely Edda had been a creature of middle earth, rather than one of a higher sphere. The fear of this reflexion had been ever present to the Erl-princess, and this it was which prevented her from making an earlier disclosure of her condition.

Holm, endeavoured as well as he could, to forget the exalted nature of his wife, and she assisted his attempt by every means in her power.

She laid aside the natural lofty deportment of her character, became mild obedient, and unassuming, and exhibited all those endearing qualities which constitute the charms of an earthly female. She perfectly knew the main-spring of affection, that we must not dazzle where we desire to please, and that the coy reserve of reverential awe can never be united with the throbs of impassioned love.

With the most tender sympathy she entered into all his joys and afflictions; the latter of which might be said to spring from a source of common anxiety. All their fears were now directed to their approaching reception at Thule. Would the Erl-King be there? Would the father of Thulis have made their peace? Would the Erl-King have abandoned his former plan of making Edda queen of Scandinavia; and would he receive her and her Holm, with a father's kindness? These were the questions which constantly obtruded themselves upon the minds of the tender pair; which formed the theme of their daily converse, and hourly speculation, till their tedious voyage drew to an end.

At length they reached the capital of Thule, and Edda's joy knew no bounds, as she beheld her father and her uncle, waiting on the beech to receive them. While the latter poured out his transports on the recovery of his darling Thulis, the Erl-King was profuse in his marks of affection to Edda. There was something cold in his reception of Holm, but towards his daughter and his infant grandson, his kindness was most parental. It was quite clear, that Edda's child was the sole cause of his acknowledging an alliance, which could not be expected to please this haughty monarch's ambition.

Holm was as happy as he well could be, though he did not feel quite at ease with the thoughts of his high connexions. He was particularly displeased with an odious habit of the Erl-King, who upon almost every occasion, flashed sparks of fire from his eyes; for those passions which in the human countenance only manifest themselves, by the blood mantling in the cheek were with him, displayed by a coruscation of azure flame, from the organs of vision. Holm

had once perceived this appearance in his Edda, and found little pleasure in the sight; still less was he satisfied in observing it in a being whose presence, only excited dread, rather than love. Courtesy, however, forbade him to offer any marked demonstration of his disgust; he concealed it in the recesses of his own bosom, and resolved to be upon his guard against the anger or machinations of his exalted father-in-law.

After a six weeks residence in Thule, the Erl-King said it was time to think of carrying his daughter home, and shewing his son the marvels of his capital. Holm had little desire to enter on this journey, but he felt it would be an impeachment of his valour to decline complying with the Erl-King's wish.

The aged monarch of Thule, who saw deeper into the young man's heart than any one else, endeavoured to remove his fears, and Holm ascended the ship somewhat tranquillized in his mind, though ignorant of the situation of the Erl-King's kingdom.

He frequently took occasion to make enquiries

of his father-in-law on this subject, but he always received some evasive or unsatisfactory reply. One day as they stood talking near the vessel's prow, and apparently in perfect harmony, Holm thought the present occasion a favourable one for repeating his question, but the Erl-King, who perceived they were quite alone, now resolved on putting a design into execution which he had long entertained; and to which he felt provoked by the opportunity and the persevering nature of the enquiry. "My capital," exclaimed he, "shall never meet thy sight; away and seek it, in the depths of the ocean."

With these words he gave Edda's hapless husband a violent thrust, which hurled him many yards over the vessel's side, when he instantly sank into the fathomless deep.

While Holm pursued his downward course in the abyss of waters, the Erl-King uttered repeated shrieks of dismay, over the catastrophe which had befallen his son-in-law. His only object, now, was to remove every suspicion from his daughter's mind, that he had been

accessary to the deed. He therefore assumed an air of deep distress, every thing in the ship which could float, was instantly ordered out to assist in recovering the unhappy victim, he even descended in a boat, to superintend the exertions of his people, and for the first time since their acquaintance, bestowed the most endearing epithets upon his absent son-in-law.

The grief of Edda on this occasion may be more readily conceived than depicted. A mere mortal wife, with similar feelings, would have rushed into the waves to share her husband's fate. But to her, this proceeding would have availed but little; the life of an ethereal being is not thus easily destroyed in the ocean, and yet how willingly would she have resigned her own, to have rescued Holm. Immortality had lost all its charm, for her since she had descended from her fantastic eminence, to fall in love with a child of humanity.

In the mean time, Holm was not so abandoned as his Edda feared, and his father-in-law believed. The same power which in his youthful days, had rescued him from a watery

grave, was still watchful over his life, to raise him from the devouring gulph into which he had been plunged. He felt himself suddenly borne to the surface of the water, with his body half emerging from it, and carried along over the foaming billows without exertion, and almost without a perception of the rapidity with which he moved.

In this manner he pursued his course, over the drear expanse, the whole day through, till towards evening he saw the land gradually rise out of the main, and shortly afterwards a returning wave gently deposited him upon the shore. The spot where he landed was a small island of most enchanting verdure, but which on nearer observation appeared totally destitute of inhabitants.

After a night of refreshing sleep, the first thought which met his waking mind, was the cheering idea of his safety ; but this was soon dispersed, by others of less a pleasing nature.

His whole soul reverted to the situation of Edda, of her grief, her defenceless condition in the hands of her tyrannical father, and the

overwhelming dubious thought whether they should ever meet again. Burthened with these reflexions, he wandered through the whole island. For one needful care, the apprehension of finding a subsistence in this deserted spot, he found sufficient consolation. Trees laden with fruits and edible plants of every kind, were seen in most abundant profusion; cooling springs and sheltered coverts for repose or dwelling, were met in every direction; no beast or reptile, hostile to man, appeared to find a harbour within it, but——this was all. For hopes of another kind, no encouragement was given. A chilling deathlike solitude pervaded every spot; no trace or sound of animal life was distinguishable; while the desert stillness of the land, was only interrupted by the hollow moans of the surge upon the beach. Around and above the immeasurable surface of the ocean, and the boundless vault of heaven, both spoke with irrefragable certainty the impossibility of seeing Edda again.

Two long and tedious years were thus spent

in solitary exile, when a kinder destiny shone upon the fortunes of our hero. Holm was one evening pacing the strand of the sea, a custom he had always observed, as the sun was about to sink into the ocean, when he perceived a human figure approaching at some distance from him. In the first moment of surprize he was disposed to believe it a mere illusion of the sight; but the figure continued to move in a slow and measured step, and soon drew sufficiently near to leave no doubt of its reality. Holm now saw standing before him, a man of a tall majestic form, whose solemn pensive exterior had something unusually impressive in it. But overjoyed at the appearance of a human being in whatever shape, he hastened towards him, exclaiming: "Is it possible! do I once again behold, and upon this desert spot, a being of my own species. Oh where have you been during these two sad and lonely years, that we never met before." "You," replied the stranger, "have been the only inhabitant of this island; my arrival has but this instant taken place.

I came to speak with you concerning things which deeply interest you."

"How!" replied the astonished Holm, "you are but just arrived. Where then is your ship?"

"I came by ways unknown to you, though your affairs have brought me hither. You are no stranger to me, Holm of Zealand, I know the whole eventful story of your life, the wrongs inflicted on you by the Erl-King, and I am now come to tell you, that he is about to put the crown upon his injustice, by forcing his daughter to a marriage with the king of Scandinavia. The morrowing day is appointed for the nuptials, which you must prevent by your presence. To secure your rights, you must instantly leave this place."

"Leave this place? how can that be done?"

"I, who twice have rescued you from the billows of the ocean, may find the means of bringing you where I wish you to be. Yet, the service I am now about to do you, is no

mean one; what will you bestow on me as a proof of your gratitude ”

“ Oh ! every thing, every thing, take my life, take all that is dearest to me on earth.”

“ That would be too much ! I owed you something for an antient piece of kindness, which I have fairly liquidated by twice saving your life. For my future favors I shall exact a payment, though not so great as you now proffer me. I will only receive half of what you so dearly prize.”

“ Oh ! cease these painful stipulations,” exclaimed the distracted Holm, “ and instantly bear me to the presence of my beloved Edda !”

“ It is yet too early,” said the stranger, with the same solemnity of manner he had first assumed, “ the sun must descend ere we begin our journey. Be seated, and give ear to what you must previously be acquainted with, in order to execute this important affair as I wish.”

Holm immediately placed himself on a stone

opposite the stranger, who commenced a narrative of which his eager auditor heard not a single word ; for, strange as it may seem, the former had scarcely opened his lips, before Holm began to close his eyes, and at last sank into a deep sleep.

No person could have felt less inclination for sleep than Holm, as he was thus suddenly overpowered by it. His whole soul was swelling with impatience to visit the spot which was to deprive him of his Edda. A thousand anxious thoughts pervaded his breast as to the feelings with which she regarded this event ; whether this treason to his memory was a voluntary, or compulsive act ; did she in fact deserve his compassion, or must he load her with contempt and anger ? There is no condition less favourable to sleep than this stormy state of suspense ; and yet, with the first sound of this important tale, Holm felt himself seized with a degree of drowsiness which scarcely allowed him to sit upright. His eyelids now slowly closed and re-expanded in wearisome

succession ; he only dimly perceived the stranger standing before him : he scarcely heard the dying murmurs of his voice ; at length all sensation left him, of what he saw and heard, and he fell down perfectly entranced. This probably was a part of the stranger's plan, who might have felt no disposition to reveal the unknown way by which he had approached the island.

As Holm awoke, his feelings told him he must have slumbered a considerable time, during which his mind had been visited by the most extraordinary dreams ; but even the visions of his sleeping moments failed to fill him with more surprize than the place in which he now perceived himself. At first he conceived all he saw to be only a continuation, or rather a fresh scene in his former dream ; but having fully assured himself of the reality of all around him, his astonishment knew no bounds. Instead of the verdant fields of his lonely island, he saw before him a magnificent palace : the green sward upon which he had been accustomed to recline, was exchanged

for the marble pavement of an extensive court ; and the deathlike stillness of his solitude, which was only disturbed by the sullen roar of the ocean, was superseded by the busy hum of human voices. He now rose to enquire the name of the country, to which he had been transported, but forgetful of the change in his own condition, his application was made with an eagerness and in a tone of authority, which only produced rebuffs from some, and taunts from others.

The cause of this soon became apparent to our hero upon casting a look at the tattered condition of his raiment. His two years residence upon the island, had so entirely destroyed his apparel, as to excite even a smile in himself, when contrasted with the authoritative tone he had assumed. The only relic of his former state which bespoke his rank, was his trusty sword whose hilt was decorated with a costly stone. This had been a present from the King of Thule ; it was highly valued for the donor's sake, and on that account had been his constant companion on all occasions,

and had graced his thigh when hurled into the water by the Erl-King. As he glanced at his thread-bare garb, his eye was arrested by this monument of his former glory, and the contemplation of it, seemed to instil him with hopes of better fortune.

He now perceived the necessity of shaping his conduct in stricter uniformity with his attire; and modestly applied to one of the servants passing, for a draught of water.

“Aye now indeed,” replied the latter, “you may succeed; you will find courtesy a much more current coin in this part of the world, than insolence. Come with me, and you shall quench your thirst, but not with water; there is to be no water drank here this day.” The servant presented him with a goblet of wine, for which he returned thanks, but his benefactor quickly gave him to understand, that a meed of barren thanks was not the requital expected of him. The servant now ordered him to take a bucket and draw the water from a neighbouring well with which he was to sprinkle the marble court, prior to the appearance of the king and the princess.

“And pray,” said Holm, “who may the king and princess be?”

“Who may they be? Who can they be but our royal master, the King of Scandinavia and his bride, the daughter of the King of the uninhabited islands.”

Holm now saw every thing in its true light. He was no stranger to the pompous title, occasionally assumed by the Erl-King, and the King of Scandinavia, was known to every inhabitant of the North. He now perceived, that the intelligence he had received on the previous day, was not a mere caprice of his own fancy ; that Edda was about to become the wife of another, and that he was placed by some unknown power in the courtyard of the palace to interrupt the ceremony.

He was occupied with these and similar thoughts, when a female figure glided before him which he instantly recognized. It was the fair Thulis, who was hastening into the garden to gather a bridal garland of flowers, for her friend. To her, Holm resolved to make himself known, and accordingly on her return, placed himself immediately before her.

“What!” exclaimed the astonished damsel, “Holm of Zealand in this disguise and at this hour? Oh where have you hitherto concealed yourself? It is not long since we have had reason to believe you were in existence, but your absence, your eternal absence?”

“Perhaps,” replied Holm in a tone of half smothered emotion, “my absence ought to have lasted still longer. To a wife, who holds herself a widow and is about to enter into a second marriage, the appearance of her former husband can hardly be agreeable.” “That,” rejoined Thulis, “you shall speedily learn; only let me hasten to inform the disconsolate bride of your arrival.”

Holm made a fruitless attempt to check her progress, as he cautioned her to be prudent in communicating the discovery, but Thulis rushing rapidly beside him, disappeared into the palace. Edda was seated at her toilette, the patient subject of decorations unwillingly submitted to, when the breathless Thulis entered her apartment, and uttered the name of her long lost husband. Without regarding the

condition in which she sate, with her hair hanging in loose disorder, her garments only half arranged, Edda darted out of the room and followed her friend into the court, where she was to meet the first and only mortal who could boast of enjoying her love. She rushed into his arms, and bedewed his breast with tears of ardent affection.

The novelty of the scene soon collected a crowd of wondering domestics around them, and the three monarchs, the King of Scandinavia, the Erl-King, and the aged King of Thule, made their appearance at a balcony. They had heard the rapid footsteps of the females as they descended the stairs; the subsequent disturbance in the court; and filled with curiosity, had left the festive-board, to gaze upon a sight which could not have been desired by two of these distinguished sovereigns.

The King of Scandinavia assumed an air of mingled wrath and contempt, the Erl-King poured forth a continuous stream of azure sparks, the venerable monarch of Thule, alone

considered it best to repress his anger till the affair should become more intelligible. The name of Holm, which was incessantly repeated by his enraptured wife, soon solved the mystery, though it was insufficient to restore tranquillity. With the Erl-King, it only served as an increased cause for his demonstrations of anger. It is impossible to say what might have happened in such a moment of uncontrolled indignation, had not the King of Thule, who exercised a considerable influence over this un-earthly prince, taken him aside, to remonstrate with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Having in some degree, succeeded, he then descended to the court, to ascertain the identity of the stranger.

Of the events immediately succeeding Holm's recognition and its consequences, it will be sufficient to say that, the intercession of the King of Thule effected an arrangement, with which all parties were contented, or, were compelled to be so. Every law, both human and divine, forbade the separation of Holm and Edda. Even the aerial polity, acknow-

ledged by the Erl-King, declared for the indissoluble nature of the bond ; which had become doubly obligatory by the existence of the infant Holm. The King of Scandinavia renounced all claim to his bride, in whom another possessed an earlier and better right ; and he did this with a promptitude which reflected honor on his liberality and sense of justice. For he was by no means the malignant prince, which Edda in the dread of his embraces, had formerly described him to her husband. The Erl-King sheltered himself under a sullen dignified silence ; he feared Holm might betray the treacherous deed which had been the source of all these strange events ; but his dislike of a connexion with a common mortal, who possessed neither crown or kingdom, was easily perceptible amid his silence.

The King of Thule discovered the thoughts revolving in the mind of his relative, and determined on relieving the newly united couple from the consequences they seemed to forebode.

“ If,” said he, “ the hero, Holm of Zealand, be held unworthy of being allied to the King of

the uninhabited islands, a better chance may befall the heir to the crown of Thule. The laws of the frozen isle, exclude my daughter from the succession; she must possess that throne her future husband may bring her; mine must pass away to a stranger. That stranger shall be Holm; though neither I or my people can justly give him such a title; he has meritoriously gained the love of us both, and deserved that reward which I had allotted him long before the occurrences of the present day were thought of. Hail! therefore, to the future monarch of Thule, the deliverer of my daughter, and my kingdom, the valiant Holm of Zealand!"

In this acclamation of their beloved sovereign, all the nobles of Thule, who were present, united; the lovers sank to his feet, and saluted him as their father; the Erl-King dismissed the frown from his brow, and the King of Scandinavia directed that, the festival, in honor of the reunion of Holm and his Edda should that evening be celebrated with the

same pomp and solemnity as if it had been for his own wedding.

All now resigned themselves to joy and festivity; the palace resounded with acclamations of mirthful revelry. The approaching night was banished by the artificial glare of a thousand lamps, the board was spread with every delicacy, and the cheering goblet passed to the health and prosperity of the happy couple.

Suddenly the eyes of all were directed to the centre of the hall, and to an object which excited universal alarm, though the cause of this dismay was rather felt than evident. A stranger was seen to stand there, whose person was perfectly unknown, or the means by which he had entered. With a solemn measured step he approached the upper end of the table where Edda and her husband were seated, and said:—"Do you know me, Holm of Zealand? I am he, by whose assistance you enjoy your present happiness. I come to claim my reward; you cannot but remember the pro-

mise made me yesterday, that I should possess one half of all you hold dearest on earth."

"Name it," replied Holm, who foresaw nothing sinister in the request, and who alone remained composed amid the general consternation, "name it; I am prepared to keep my word. My present store of wealth enables me to resign one half my treasure without feeling myself impoverished."

"Indeed!" rejoined the stranger. "Well then, since it is so, I know there is nothing you more highly prize than your wife and your infant child. I will not act with cruelty towards you, *choose you* which of the two you prefer; *I* will rest content with what you reject.—You hesitate! can you deny the pledge was made?"

During this conversation Edda had sat in mute astonishment; she now found words to give her thoughts an utterance.

"And could you make such an engagement?" she exclaimed, as she turned to Holm. And did you know *him* with whom you made it? Oh! Holm, Holm; thoughtless, rash, imprudent mortal! how justly did I charge you

on a former occasion to beware ! This is the prince of Mona, our antient and inveterate foe, against whom I so fruitlessly warned you, into whose snare you have now fallen, and from which no earthly power can rescue you. Both I and my child must follow you into the abyss, we are all irrevocably lost."

Holm sate more dead than alive, both at the stranger's request and his wife's address. A universal terror pervaded the whole assembly. Some wept over the sudden shipwreck of the fortunes of the newly united couple, others who were ignorant of the prince of Mona's power resorted to threats of vengeance, and others proffered wealth, lands, and every substantial treasure to induce him to forego his claim. But the stranger remained inexorable. "Yes," exclaimed Edda, "in this my fears are but too fatally confirmed. I knew you would not rest till you had repaid me for your disappointed passion, till you had made me wretched beyond redemption. Ye heavenly powers by whom must his thirst of vengeance be allayed by me or this unoffending child?"

“ I rejoice,” replied the stranger in a scornful tone, “ that you acknowledge both the cause and the justice of my revenge ; yet if the lovely Edda should for a moment think that I seek possession of her irresistible charms, she will lamentably deceive herself. No, I willingly resign her, and her attractions to their rightful lord and, content myself with this child whom I now shall bear on the road which brought me hither. Adieu ! We never meet again.”

With these words he seized the infant Holm whom his weeping mother, fruitlessly endeavored to detain, and whom her husband who was fearful of losing his wife, beheld in the stranger’s power with less painful feelings, than if his election had fallen, otherwise.

“ Be comforted Edda ?” he said to his agonized wife ; “ this man will do our child no injury. Whether he be the prince of Mona, whom you so much dread, is beyond my knowledge to declare ; but this I know full well, that he is the same being, who has twice rescued me from the jaws of death ;

the same to whom I am indebted for my restoration to your presence. Can you believe such a man will contribute, to our eternal misery."

"And is this your serious opinion of me," enquired the stranger.

"Well then! now attend to mine. You know me, but not all that it concerns you to know. If I have preserved *your* life, you too have preserved mine. As this cruel princess and this blood-thirsty tyrant, this monarch of the uninhabited islands chose to reward my love for an ungrateful girl, with the loss of life, it was you who rescued me from destruction by conferring upon my corpse the boon of a little earth. To you I vowed a lasting gratitude, to her eternal revenge, and I thought to accomplish this vow, by one and the same means. I contrived to let you see each other; love kindled within your bosoms, love to an ethereal maiden, love to a common mortal, and what more effective means could have been chosen to exalt the one, and debase the other? Whatever since has befallen you, my

hand has been active in directing your destinies. In humbling the lofty pride of the scornful beauty, I have in some degree succeeded; I freely own, my inclination would have often led me to visit her with a severer lot, but my gratitude for Holm, checked my desire of vengeance, whose happiness was too intimately connected with hers, to admit of all my plans being executed. For her husband's sake, my heart by degrees became softened towards her, and ere this perhaps, would have fully relented, had not a new passion intervened to fan the flames of the old one."

"Yes, Edda I confess myself in love—but no longer with your charms; my heart only beats for your friend, the gentle, guileless, generous Thulis. You know my secret understanding with Henry von Roskild, but his gross conception was too impracticable, to admit of a full compliance with all my wishes. Perhaps in this, a superior power interfered for Edda's preservation. Instead of wholly resigning his daughter-in-law into my hands, he transported her to a place, where I could only

delight myself with gazing on her beauty, as I hastened to fulfil my intentions on the island of her retreat, I saw the lovely Thulis, and found every other wish, absorbed in my desire of possessing her. In this all my future hopes of happiness lie, and can she resign her expectations of a mortal throne, to share mine with me, this shall be the last hostile act I will inflict upon her friend. The child shall instantly be restored to its anxious mother. I entertained no evil design against him, I would have made him heir to the throne of Mona, and the islands of the tranquil sea. But why should I seek a stranger's child, when the lovely Thulis may present me with sons of my own?"

With these words every eye was directed towards the daughter of the king of Thule, who sat beside the king of Scandinavia, overwhelmed with confusion, and unable to utter a word. Holm and Edda cast a look of imploring agony on her, as if hanging on her decision for their future happiness, the friendship of the powerful prince of Mona, and the possession of their child.

Thulis delayed her reply. Her heart

had already spoken but too distinctly in favor of the generous prince who sate beside her; he was young, handsome, and amiable, the prince of Mona serious, silent, and solemn, and moreover, a being of that omnious race which earthly maidens rarely bestow their love on. Her eyes wandered with anxious enquiry, from the infant Holm, who still trembled in the arms of his fearful claimant, to Edda, and she read in the eager imploring gaze of her kinswoman, and the swelling tears which coursed down her cheeks, a mother's hopes, and a friend's request. The appeal was irresistible; she thought on the many sacrifices she had already made in proof of her sincere affection and love for Edda, and she resolved that, this the last and greatest, the crown of all, should not be wanting.

She rose, and no one mistook her purpose, least of all the prince of Mona, whose face became irradiated with a look of extatic joy, and who received her rising as a signal for delivering the infant Holm to his distressed, and breathless mother. The king of Thule placed

his daughter's hand in that of his exalted son-in-law; an alliance less revolting to the aged monarch, than to the trembling Thulis.

The festive scene was now renewed, and the King of Scandinavia, who was thus twice in one day deprived of his expected brides yielded to the happier destinies of his more fortunate rivals, with a becoming grace; and entertained his guests in a round of unceasing pleasure, till they sought their respective homes.

Reason and reflexion soon allayed the fears of the gentle Thulis, and reconciled her to the generous sacrifice she had made; and with time, the love and gratitude of her delighted husband tended to soften the repelling severities of his exterior. What he wanted in those pleasing graces which fascinate the eye, were amply repaired by his exalted wisdom, and the dignified superiority he maintained among the beings of his own race. In his arms she might hope to attain immortality, while Edda by her marriage with a mortal husband, was daily hastening towards the shades of dissolution.

Years of uninterrupted love, and unceasing happiness, crowned the sufferings of Holm and his Edda ; but at length the time of painful separation arrived, a separation of but short duration—for the same day which saw the expiring flame of Edda's existence, also witnessed the decease of Holm.

With Holm of Zealand, died the glory of Thule. His son, whom the Erl-king never suffered to leave him, and who was to succeed to his grand-sires throne, was at that time absent. The pirate Naddock came from the distant Atlantis ; took possession of the vacant throne of the frozen isle, and changed its name to Iceland, by which it is known to the present day.

END.







